

Thesis 1449

520745

1

THE LIFE AND WORK OF KOBAYASHI ISSA.

Patrick McElligott. Ph.D. Japanese.

ProQuest Number: 11010599

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 11010599

Published by ProQuest LLC (2018). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

29/1/88



Patrick McElligott. "The Life and Work of Kobayashi Issa."

Abstract.

This thesis consists of three chapters. Chapter one is a detailed account of the life of Kobayashi Issa. It is divided into the following sections;

1. Background and Early Childhood.
2. Early Years in Edo.
3. His First Return to Kashiwabara.
4. His Journey into Western Japan.
5. The Death of His Father.
6. Life in and Around Edo. 1801-1813.
7. Life as a Poet in Shinano.
8. Family Life in Kashiwabara..
9. Conclusion.

Haiku verses and prose pieces are introduced in this chapter for the purpose of illustrating statements made concerning his life.

The second chapter traces the development of Issa's style of haiku. It is divided into five sections which correspond to the Japanese year periods in which Issa lived. Each section is preceded by selected translations from his work of that period. These selections are made on the basis of their usefulness to illustrate the development of his style of poetry. In their selection the following Japanese works on Kobayashi Issa are the major sources;

- (a). Kobayashi Issa, by Ito Masao, Sanseidō Press. 1942.
- (b). Kobayashi Issa, by Maruyama Kazuhiko, Ōfusha Press
1965.
- (c). Kobayashi Issa, by Kuriyama Riichi, Chikuma Shōbo

Press 1970.

(d). Kobayashi Issa, Mukudori no Haijin, by Kaneko Tōta
Kodansha Press.1981.

(e). Haikaiji Issa no Geijitsu, by Murata Noboru, Nishi
Nihon Tōyōbunkakenkyūsho. 1969

The text used for all translations is from The Complete Works of Issa, published by the Mainichi Shinbunsha between 1976 and 1979, in nine volumes.

The development of Issa's style is traced in relation to the major influences upon it, his rural background, his life of poverty in Edo, the discrimination and loneliness he experienced, the literary influences to which he was exposed, his personality and religious faith and its development through the suffering and misfortune he experienced.

Chapter three is a brief account of the history of the study of Issa in Japan.

N.B.

Japanese year periods, in Japanese nengo, are irregular. numbers of years which coincide with the length of the reign of each emperor. The system was instituted in the 7th. century and has continued ever since. The present year period, Shōwa, began when the present emperor began his reign in 1926, and will finish when he dies. There have been 231 year periods since the year 645 A.D.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	Page no.
Title page.	1
Abstract.	2
Table of Contents.	4
A Brief Chronology of Issa's Life.	8
<u>CHAPTER ONE. The Life of Kobayashi Issa.</u>	11-112
1. Background and Early Childhood.	11
2. Early Years in Edo.	25
3. First Return to Kashiwabara.	43
4. His Journey into Western Japan.	46
5. The Death of His Father.	61
6. Life in and Around Edo. 1801-1813.	65
7. Life as a Poet in Shinano.	83
8. Family Life in Kashiwabara.	91.
9. Conclusion to Chapter One.	99
Notes on chapter one.	101
<u>CHAPTER TWO.. The Development of Issa's</u> <u>Distinctive Style.</u>	113-577
Introduction to Chapter Two.	113
<u>Section 1. The Kansei Period. 1789-1800.</u>	119
Selected Translations.	
(a). <u>Kubun. A Night's Lodging at Kisagata.</u>	119
(b). <u>Kansei Sannen Kikō.</u>	121
(c). <u>Kansei Kuchō.</u>	135
(d). <u>Saigoku Kikō.</u>	149
<u>The Development of Issa's Distinctive Style.</u>	155-194
(i). Issa and The Classics of Japanese Literature..	155
(ii). Issa's Consciousness of Bashō.	162
(iii). Issa and the Katsushika School of Haiku.	167
(iv). Issa and the Tenmei Style.	173
(v). Issa and Ōemaru.	177
(vi). Issa, Poet of Many Styles.	179
(vii). First Signs of Issa's Distinctive Style.	181
(viii). Issa and Religion.	191
(ix). Issa the Patriot.	193

Conclusion.	194
Notes on Chapter Two Section 1.	195
<u>Section 2. The Kyōwa Period. 1801-1803.</u>	208-269
Selected Translations.	208
(a). <u>Chichi no Shūen Nikki.</u>	208
(b). <u>Kyōwa Ninen Ku Nikki.</u>	229
(c). <u>Kyōwa Kuchō.</u>	230
<u>Development of Issa's Distinctive Style.</u>	239-263
Introduction.	239
(i). Issa and Chinese Studies.	240
(ii). The Theme of Loneliness.	246
(iii). The Theme of Poverty.	250
(iv). Poems on Small and Weak Creatures.	252
(v). Issa's Observation of the Everyday Life of Ordinary People.	253
(vi). Issa's Relationship with Seibi.	257
Conclusion.	262
Notes on Chapter Two Section 2.	264
<u>Section 3. The Bunka Period. First Half.</u> 1804-1808.	270-357
Selected Translations.	270
(a). <u>Bunka Kuchō.</u>	270
(b). <u>Kubun. The Collapse of the Eida Bridge.</u>	298
(c). <u>Kubun. Konpira Otsuru.</u>	300
(d). <u>Kubun. A Thorny Flower.</u>	302
(e). <u>Kubun. A Record of My Cherry Blossom Viewing.</u>	303
<u>Development of Issa's Distinctive Style.</u>	309-351
Introduction.	309
(i). The Theme of Poverty.	310
(ii). The Theme of Loneliness.	313
(iii). Poems on Small and Weak Creatures.	320
(iv). Issa's Observation of the Lives of Ordinary People and Everyday Objects.	325

(v). The Humorous Aspect of Issa's Poetry.	326
(vi). Issa's Use of Colloquial and Every- day Expressions.	333
(vii). The Religious Factor in Issa's Work.	339
(viii). Expressions of Patriotism.	344
(ix). Issa and Ippyō.	345
Conclusion.	350
Notes on Chapter Two, Section 3.	352
 <u>Section 4. The Bunka Period. Second Half.</u>	
<u>1810-1817.</u>	358-500
Selected Translations.	358
(a). <u>Nanaban Nikki.</u>	358
(b). <u>Waga Haru Shū.</u>	419
(c). <u>Kubun. Commiseration Over a Shipwreck.</u>	431
(d). <u>Kubun. Elegy to Nakamura Keikoku.</u>	433
(e). <u>Kubun. A Fifty Year Old Bridegroom.</u>	436
<u>Development of Issa's Distinctive Style.</u>	438-490
Introduction.	438
(i). The Themes of Poverty and Loneliness.	442
(ii). Poems on Growing Old.	448
(iii). The Religious Factor in Issa's Work.	455
(iv). Poems on Small and Weak Creatures.	462
(v). Issa's Poetry About Children.	467
(vi). Issa's Observation of the Lives of Ordinary People and the Social Aspect of His Poetry.	471
(vii). The Humorous Aspect of Issa's Poetry.	474
(viii). The Composition of Issa's Verses. Word Usage and Poetic Devices.	481
(ix). Issa and Conventional Poetry.	488
Notes on Chapter Two, Section 4.	491
 <u>Section 5. The Bunsei Period. 1818-1827.</u>	
Selected Translations.	501
(a). <u>Hachiban Nikki.</u>	501
(b). <u>Kubun. A Strange Tale of the Myōsen Temple.</u>	516

(c). <u>Ora ga Haru.</u>	517
(d). <u>Kubun. New Year Supplications to Mida Buddha.</u>	524
(e). <u>Kubun. Lament Over the Death of Ishitaro.</u>	525
(f). <u>Bunsei Kuchō.</u>	528
(g). <u>Kubun. Lament Over the Death of Konsaburo.</u>	540
<u>Development of Issa's Distinctive Style.</u>	544-572
Introduction.	544
(i). Issa's Verses about Children.	552
(ii). The Clear Expression of Issa's Religious Conclusions.	555
<u>Appendix to Chapter Two, Section 5.</u>	557
An Introduction to <u>Ora ga Haru</u> and a Critical Assessment of <u>The Year of My Life</u> , by Nobuyuki Yuasa.	
Notes on Chapter Two, Section 5.	573
<u>CHAPTER THREE. A Short History of The Study of Issa in Japan.</u>	578-599
Notes on Chapter Three.	598
Bibliography.	600

A Brief Chronology of Issa's Life.¹

Year	Japanese Year	Age	Event etc.
1763	Hōreki 13th.	0	Issa born in Kashiwabara.
1765	Mēiwa 2nd.	2	Mother dies.
1770	" 7th.	7	Father marries Satsu.
1772	An-ei 1st.	9	Step-brother Senroku born.
1775	" 4th.	12	Poet Jackuo in Kashiwabara.
1776	" 5th.	13	Grandmother dies.
1777	" 6th.	14	Issa leaves Kashiwabara for Edo.
1787	Tenmei 7th.	24	Now a novice under Chikua of Katsushika Nijūrokuan.
1789	Kansei 1st.	26	Three poems by Issa in 'Haikai Sendai Shū' by Genmu.
1790	" 2nd.	27	Chikua dies in Edo. Issa becomes 'marker' for Somaru.
1791	Kansei 3rd.	28	Travels in Shimosa. Returns to Kashiwabara for first time.
1792	" 4th.	29	Leaves Edo for Shikoku. Begins six year journey to western Japan.
1793	" 5th.	30	In Kyūshū.
1794	" 6th.	31	Kyūshū - Shikoku.
1795	" 7th.	32	Matsuyama - Kyōto - Ōsaka etc.
1796	" 8th.	33	Back to Shikoku.
1797	" 9th.	34	Matsuyama - Bizen - Fukuyama.
1798	" 10th.	35	Returns to Edo, then to Kashiwabara.
1799	" 11th.	36	Sets out for Hokuriku region in March, returns in May. It seems he aborted his journey.
1800	" 12th.	37	First record of verse-making with Seibi.
1801	Kyōwa 1st.	38	Returns to Kashiwabara. Father dies. Returns to Edo.
1803	" 3rd.	40	Lives in shrine toolshed in Edo. Travels in Shimosa etc.
1804	Bunka 1st.	41	Moves from shrine to little rented house.
1806	" 3rd.	43	Meets Ippyō at Seibi's.

Year	Japanese Year	Age	Events etc.
1807	Bunka 4th.	44	Takii Kōshun dies. Returns to Kashiwabara in July and then again in November.
1808	" 5th.	45	Returns to Kashiwabara in July. Returns to Edo in Dec. Rented house re-rented to another.
1809	" 6th.	46	New Year fire in Edo. Returns to Kashiwabara in May. Back in Edo by Dec.
1810	" 7th.	47	Suspected of stealing at Seibi's.
1812	" 9th.	49	Returns to Kashiwabara in June and again in Nov.
1813	" 10th.	50	Jan. In Kashiwabara for 13th. anniversary of father's death. Ill at Zenkōji.
1814	" 11th.	51	Begins to live in Kashiwabara. Marries for the first time. Travels back to Edo (July - Dec.)
1815	" 12th.	52	In Edo from Sept - Dec.
1816	" 13th.	53	Sentaro born in April dies in May. In Edo Oct. - Dec. Seibi dies.
1817	" 14th.	54	Stays in Edo and surrounds until June. Leaves Edo for the last time. Arrives in Kashiwabara in July.
1818	Bunsei 1st.	55	Sato born in May.
1819	" 2nd.	56	Sato dies in June. Issa taken ill with the shakes.
1820	" 3rd.	57	Ishitaro born in October. Issa collapses on the road with palsy but recovers quickly.
1821	" 4th.	58	Ishitaro dies in Jan. Kiku unwell.
1822	" 5th.	59	Konsaburo born in March.
1823	" 6th.	60	Kiku becomes ill, dies in May. Konsaburo dies in Dec.

Year	Japanese Year	Age	Events etc.
1824	Bunsei 7th.	61	Marries Yuki in May. Yuki leaves after three months. Attack of palsy in August. Recovers by Dec.
1826	" 9th.	63	Marries Yao in August.
1827	" 10th.	64	Fire in Kashiwabara. Loses house, lives in storehouse. Dies of palsy Nov.19th.
1828	" 11th.		Daughter Yata born in April.

CHAPTER ONE.THE LIFE OF KOBAYASHI ISSA.1. Background and Early Childhood.

Kobayashi Issa (1763-1827) was the eldest son of a farming family in the village of Kashiwabara, an agricultural community in present day Nagano prefecture. At the time of Issa's birth this area of Japan was known as the Shinano region.² Issa spent the first fourteen years of his life here.³ These first fourteen years were to have a profound effect upon his life and work. Consequently, an understanding of this period of his life and the circumstances in which he spent his early years is essential for a clear understanding of his poetry.

Kashiwabara was typical of most farming communities in this area. Buckwheat and millet were cultivated rather than rice, which accounted for about one third of the local crop, (due) to the situation of the village on the plateau of the Fuji mountain range, the soil of which has a high volcanic ash content.⁴ Because of this, even today much of the land is unsuitable for rice, the staple crop of most of Japan.

Kashiwabara itself nestles in a hollow between three peaks to the northwest, Mounts Kurohime, Myōkō and Iizuma, each of which ranges between 2000-2500 meters in height. The whole region, particularly the area around Kashiwabara, is subject each year to prolonged and heavy snowfall, to the extent that no farm work is possible for almost half the year from November until

⁵ April. In Issa's time Kashiwabara was often completely cut off from the surrounding villages for weeks by the very heavy snowfalls.

During the Edo period (1603-1867) Kashiwabara knew some prosperity as a staging post between the province of Echizen on Japan's western coast and the thriving capital of Edo (modern Tōkyō). Marine products were transported from Echizen to the busy consumer markets of the capital on the road that passed right through the village of Kashiwabara.⁶ In Kashiwabara there was also a building known as the honjin. A honjin was a military staging post used by the local daimyō as a stopping place along the route taken for the sankin kōtai⁷ journeys that he was obliged to make in order to take his annual oath of allegiance at the shogunal court in Edo.

The population of Kashiwabara during Issa's childhood was approximately 700 people in 150 households.⁸ The majority were farmers who spent every daylight hour during the snowless months in the fields.⁹ Issa's home, by village standards was middle class.¹⁰ The fields that the Kobayashi household worked were their own and they maintained a reasonably comfortable standard of living. Records of 1821 reveal that there were by that time ten taverns, two rice-wine breweries, two shops for sundry goods, four tea houses, two grain merchants and one blacksmith.¹¹

Much of this prosperity was due to the fact that Kashiwabara was increasingly used as a staging post and stopping place for messengers, travellers, merchants and

military for all places east of Kashiwabara.¹² Especially during the summer months Kashiwabara also enjoyed visits from Edo kabuki¹³ actors, scholars and poets from the sultry Kantō plain.¹⁴

During the period of Kashiwabara's greatest prosperity in Issa's lifetime, the contrast between village life in winter and summer must have been quite remarkable. It can only be imagined how that in the summer a constant stream of travellers would keep both the inns and the tea houses busy. The hardworking farmers would relax in the cool of the evening by conversing with friends or neighbours, or by being entertained occasionally by a kabuki play, or by lectures or poetry contests held by visiting scholars and poets. We can but imagine other means of relaxation, perhaps a shrine festival, a horse auction, or even a daimyō procession passing down the main street.

Then the snow would fall. The first few flakes in late October would be the heralds of the heavier falls that would lie thick upon both ground and rooftop, at times to a depth of five or six feet, and deeper still on roads and fields. Days, even weeks would pass without the sight of one's neighbour, and even then only to engage together in the backbreaking task of shovelling the heavy snow off the roof lest the house should collapse under the steadily accumulating weight of the relentless snow.¹⁵ This task was made all the more tiresome by the fact that it brought no reward for sweat and effort. No outside work could be done, and inside the

farmhouse the smoke from the central hearth blackened everything, even the faces of those who sat around it making straw rope and sandals.

The farmer was a prisoner of the snow which would become banked up high around his house, even higher than the eaves of the house. The inns would be empty, the roads would know few travellers, the scholar and the poet would be here only if he planned to stay the winter, and the daimyo would be warm within his castle. Kashiwabara was a place best avoided in the winter. Even today the weather conditions are very much the same. The cool clear mountain air and the natural beauty of this part of Japan attract many holiday makers in the summer from the hot and humid Kantō plain, but in the winter it is a place avoided by all but the skiing enthusiast.

The name Kashiwabara may be translated into English as 'Oak Fields'. Although these trees are not in great evidence there today it is considered that there were many oak trees in this area during Issa's lifetime.¹⁶

Issa's poetry contains numerous verses reflecting life in Kashiwabara. They include the following;

Kashiwaba mo chōgō shitari chiru momiji.¹⁷

Blending

With the falling maple leaves,

Oak leaves too.

Kagadono no misaki o tsui to kigisu kana.¹⁸

In procession passing by,

The Lord of Kaga

Is led, but briefly

By a pheasant!

In this poem one can picture the daimyō's retinue passing down the street in pomp and splendor when a pheasant that has strayed into the road seems, for a few moments, to lead the whole procession.

Tsubunure no daimyō o miru kotatsu kana.¹⁹

Seen from the warm hearthside,

Drenched by the pouring rain

The Lord of the Manor

Passes by!

Issa's home was by the roadside²⁰ and from there he contrasted the snug warmth of his humble home with the plight of the rich and powerful daimyō making his way to Edo in a heavy shower.

Issa's early years in Kashiwabara greatly affected his character and his work. The yearly battle against the snow and the isolation and loneliness that it brought has influenced considerably the character of the people of these parts, and Issa was no exception. The struggle against the snow bred patience and impressed upon the people of this area a practical and realistic attitude towards the seasons. The unrelenting pressure of the snow and the fight against the inconveniences and danger that it brought was physically exhausting and produced nothing but heaviness of spirit and worn nerves. The sound of the heavy snow against the wooden partitions of the houses was to the farmer of these parts, not the equivalent of the soft flutter of flower petals, which was the conventional poetic taste nurtured on the more

temperate east coast, but the very beating of the wings of satan himself. Snow was the robber of prosperity, the denier of the opportunity to work, the oppressor of the spirit, a dark cloud over a previously happy home, and the very stuff of prison walls. The inhabitants of this part of Japan are patient and longsuffering, somewhat Stoic in their resignation, given to brooding, and of a dour temperament.

Issa was never able to overcome the dislike for snow that his early years in Kashiwabara bred in him. He was later to write many verses about snow but hardly any in its praise. Poetic convention considered snow a thing of beauty along with the moon and the blossoms, but the first snowfalls of the beginning of November drew from Issa no poetic expression in its admiration but rather;

Hatsu yuki o imaimashii to iubekana.²¹

Autumn evening,

Call it accursèd,

First fall of winter snow.

Hatsu yuki to ieba tachi machi ni san shaku.²²

"First fall of snow",

No sooner said and

Three feet deep it lies

Or four!

Yuki chiru ya odoke mo ienu shinano sora.²³

Now who can jest or joke?

Snow flutters down

From Shinano skies!

Hatsu yuki o kataki no yo no soshiri kana.²⁴

Curse it,

Curse it as an enemy,

First fall of winter snow.

This attitude of Issa's towards snow is perhaps the clearest example of how his background shaped his poetry and directed it away from the conventional, but we shall see that his background and upbringing were to have deeper and more subtle effects upon his work.

This hatred of snow produced from Issa the following unique verse in which snow is virtually personified,²⁵ something quite remarkable in Japanese poetry.

Kokoro kara shinano no yuki ni furare ker²⁶i.²⁷

As if to turn me back,

Falling,

Falling upon me with all its might!

Shinano snow.

Unable to work, confined to the house by the snow, forced to eat the pickles, dried fish and rice stored up against the winter the Shinano farmer could not but be realistic about the elements.

His predicament is captured in this verse of Issa's;

Hane haete zeni ga tobu nari toshi no kure.²⁸

The year draws in.

Money sprouts wings

And flies away!

Unable to grow food, the farmer could only eat his stores and use what little cash he had to buy the necessities of life he was unable to produce himself. The snow also made it impossible for him to grow a surplus of food to sell in order to save.

The end of the winter was eagerly awaited and every sign of spring enjoyed. The following verses depicting Issa's love of children and small animals also catch the joy of early spring in Kashiwabara;

29

Yuki tokete mura ippai no kodomo kana.

The snow melts

And the village street

Is filled with children!

30

Katasumi ni tori katamari yukige kana.

In the green corner of the field

Small birds gather together

As the snow thaws.

Issa's father, Yagohei Kobayashi, was 31 years old when Issa, his first child, was born. Issa's mother's name was Kuni. Issa's birth resulted in a three generation household, the norm in Japan for the household of the eldest son, as Yagohei was.³¹ Both parents worked hard in the fields³² while the grandmother looked after the home and the children. Issa's mother died when he was two years old. This was a serious economic blow to the household³³ for the wife spent many hours in the fields. For the next six years Issa was almost completely in the care of his grandmother while his father worked. When Issa was seven years old his father remarried and at this point there entered into Issa's life a woman to whom he was never to be truly reconciled. His step-mother was an industrious woman with a strong will and an unyielding temperament.³⁴

From the age of three Issa's life was not a happy one.

It seems his grandmother spoiled him by pandering to his every whim, and thus used to his own way, he found it difficult to harmonize with other children.

He later wrote of his childhood;

"When I was little I never played with the other boys and girls for I was fearful that they would mock me by singing;

The motherless child
Is known everywhere,
All alone at the gate
Biting his nails,
Just standing there.'

Unable to mix with adults I used to crouch in the shelter of the backyard where all the sticks and grass was piled, and there spend the long days. I felt so wretched.

Ware to kite asobeya oya no nai susume.
Come and play,
Come and play with me,³⁵
Motherless sparrow."

Although this poem was almost certainly written by Issa when he was some fifty years of age (although he attributed it to himself first at six and later at eight years of age),³⁶ it reveals clearly that Issa's childhood was not a happy one.

Used to his own way, Issa clashed with his step-mother from the very start, and this continued until her death. The lack of harmony between the young Issa and his step-mother,³⁷ Satsu, was further intensified soon after her marriage to his father because within one year she produced a son. Issa's step-brother was named Senroku. With one more mouth to feed and hard times brought on by the fact that Issa's father had remained a widower for six years without the help of his wife in the fields,³⁸ the enmity between Issa and Satsu increased, and Issa's only refuge was his grandmother.³⁹

Of these childhood days Issa was also later to write;

"In the fifth month of the ninth year of the Meiwa era (May 1773), and on the tenth day, Senroku was born to my step-mother. At this time Nobuyuki was nine years old (Nobuyuki was one of Issa's boyhood names, his given name was Kobayashi Yataro. Issa is the pen name he chose for himself much later.) How pitiful his life was from this time on. Made to nurse his little step-brother into the long spring nights, clothes always wet through with the baby's dribble and urine, while in the shorter autumn evenings there was never a time when his skin was not wet from the same! If Senroku ever cried Nobuyuki was beaten with a stick, both mother and father suspecting him of causing the tears. A hundred times a day, 'eight thousand' times a month, there was never a day in all the year when Nobuyuki's eyes were not swollen with crying." ⁴⁰

No doubt there is considerable literary gloss in the above account as it was written long after the days described. What is clear, however, is that Issa's early life was not a happy one. It seems certain that such unhappiness in his formative years helped to produce in Issa some of the strong characteristics for which he became known in his later life. ⁴¹

The Kobayashi family was also one of the farming households designated to provide a horse for the local daimyō and other travelling dignitaries on their way to Edo. ⁴² Because of this, Issa was constantly exposed to the traffic of all kinds that passed through Kashiwabara during the snowless months for the Kobayashi house was by the roadside of the main route through the village. That Issa's father had a good knowledge of Chinese characters is evident by the fact that he left a will, no longer extant, ⁴³ in his own hand. The tax system at that time was such that tax was largely measured in rice and other produce which

made it necessary for the farmer to be literate to some degree if only for accounting purposes.⁴⁴ Being one of a number of houses obliged to provide a horse for the daimyō's journeys to Edo, in lieu of certain taxes, also necessitated that someone in the household have a good working knowledge of written Japanese.⁴⁵

Issa's father was evidently literate, literacy being by this time widespread in Japan. At this time, writing haiku verse was the literary pursuit of a great many of the common people.⁴⁶ That Issa also learned writing in his childhood is attested by this section in his later writings;

"With the advent of spring I would help my parents in the fields. During the day I would cut grass, pick herbs and drive the horse. At night by the window, in the light of the moon, I worked straw, beating it soft to make sandals. There was no time to practice writing."⁴⁷

Next door to the Kobayashi household lived their neighbour, Nakamura Rokuzaemon, a man of learning.⁴⁸

Nakamura wrote haiku verse, and it is thought that he taught calligraphy and grammar to the local children, in his home.⁴⁹ Issa's boyhood friends were the two sons of the Nakamura household and Issa was, in all probability, a frequent visitor to their home. Later one of the Nakamura sons helped as a mediator on Issa's behalf in the dispute with Satsu over the will left by his father.⁵⁰

During this time, when Issa was between the ages of twelve and fourteen, there stayed at the Nakamura household a haiku poet, Horitoku Ki, who used the pen name Jackuo.⁵¹ This poet was from the military caste and of considerably high estate before he renounced such to

become a haiku poet. Some have theorized that Issa⁵² actually studied haiku under this poet, or at least learned writing from him. It seems unlikely that Issa as a child, however promising, would have had such instruction from this poet. The social difference between them would be sufficient reason alone for such an assumption.⁵³

However, the presence of such a man of letters in such a small community for an extended period, could not but have had some indirect effect upon most of its members. It is likely that the young Issa, along with other children, received instruction in writing and verse from one of the adults of the Nakamura family who in turn had received instruction in haiku verse from Jackuo. It is quite possible, too, that the older children were sometimes present at times of informal haiku practice and composition in the Nakamura home while this poet was present there.⁵⁴

Issa's father it seems, was almost completely subdued⁵⁵ by the quick tempered and strong willed Satsu. At thirteen years of age Issa lost his last human refuge when his grandmother died. The buffer between Issa and Satsu that the grandmother had provided was now no more and the confrontation between the two strong willed personalities became more intense. Between the two antagonists Issa's father appears weak-willed and unable to create any workable compromise amidst the constant friction in the family.⁵⁶ The driving force behind the plan to send Issa alone to Edo almost certainly came

57
from Satsu.

It was not uncommon for a farming family of that region to send a son off to work in Edo, especially during the snowy winter months. This practice was called kuchi-berashi, which can be literally translated as 'the reduction of the number of mouths'.⁵⁸ It might well have been that economic considerations contributed towards the decision to send Issa away, but they were secondary to the antagonism that his step-mother felt towards him.

After this unhappy start in life Issa, at the age of fourteen, left for Edo in the sixth year of the Anei period (1777). There has been some debate concerning this date because of apparent discrepancies in Issa's own records. In Chichi no Shūen Nikki he recorded that he left Kashiwabara in late spring at the age of thirteen.⁵⁹ He also recorded that his grandmother died in 1776 on the tenth of August, and that he himself was still at home at this time.⁶⁰ Counting from the year of Issa's birth in 1763, he would have been thirteen years of age in May 1776.⁶¹ However, Issa also wrote that he was very ill in Kashiwabara after the memorial service for his grandmother thirty seven days after her death.⁶² Consequently, it seems certain that Issa did not leave Kashiwabara during 1776, but rather that he left in late spring of 1777 at the age of fourteen. It can only be concluded that any references to his age as thirteen should be interpreted as thirteen full years rather than as meaning thirteen years of age. This is further

confirmed by his reference to having left Kashiwabara 'twenty four years ago' in the Chichi no Shūen Nikki when dating his entry as;

"The first year of the Kyōwa period",
 i.e. 1801.⁶³ This would count back to 1777 when Issa was fourteen, not thirteen years old. Japanese commentators, using the traditional Japanese way of counting age, write that he was fifteen years old when⁶⁴ he left Kashiwabara.

Issa's father accompanied him some fifteen kilometres along the road to Edo, to the village of Mure. There they parted, the memory of which always moved Issa deeply. He later recalled his father's farewell;

"Be careful to eat nothing harmful, do not do anything to make others think ill of you, come back in good health and let me see you again as soon as possible". So said father with tears in his eyes, trying to be brave".⁶⁵

Issa was not to see his father again for another fifteen years..

2. Early Years in Edo.

Issa did not travel to Edo alone,⁶⁶ but what happened to him during his early years in the great city remains unknown. It has been speculated that he entered a temple as a novice priest, that he became an apprentice locksmith, a calligrapher, and because he showed great interest in and seemed knowledgeable of medicines, and the Kobayashi family had one of its members practicing medicine in Edo, that he became apprenticed to a doctor.⁶⁷ Another theory is that he became apprenticed to the rich merchant and haiku poet Ryūsa.⁶⁸

None of these theories have any real historical basis and are all made in retrospect upon Issa's life. Some are based upon incidental references in his poems while others are local legend. The fact remains that the first ten years of Issa's life in Edo remain a fascinating blank which continues to intrigue students of Issa's life and work.

Drifters from the countryside were common in Edo at this time. The vast majority had no firm promise of employment and no fixed abode. They moved from one temporary job to another finding work where they could. There is no reason to believe that the young Issa was any exception to this pattern. His father is reported by Issa to have later said;

"... you were still a young and immature youth when I sent you off to the hard life of the labourer in Edo."⁶⁹

Issa himself later looked back upon these years and described them as follows;

"The bird without a nest wanders looking for a place to rest and endures the dampness of the early dew, hiding under the eaves of a stranger's roof, thus keeping out the coldness of the frost in the shade of another's home. Or to the mountain he flies with a troubled heart to cry unceasingly, yet only to be answered by the lonely sighing of the wind among the pines in the shade of which the fallen leaves become an evening coverlet. At other times he goes to the haunting loneliness of the seashore and there preserves his bitter life among the sounds of wind and tide. Thus he passes the days and months of his troublesome life chirping pleasantly verses of rural haiku poetry."⁷⁰

Such reflection upon his early life in Edo is embellished with literary afterthought, but even so indicates that his early years there were indeed no different to those of any other drifter from the countryside. Such people arriving in Edo had to carry on a lonely struggle in a life of poverty in the service of anyone who would employ them.

In 1777, the year Issa left Kashiwabara, the Edo government issued a decree strictly forbidding any more movement from the countryside to the capital, but it did not stem the flow.⁷¹ The majority of those from the countryside seeking a livelihood in Edo were from the poorer peasant families who had no trade or profession. They found employment as best they could as servants or labourers in merchant or military houses as palanquin bearers, odd job men, or peddlars. They worked for as much as they could get, which was usually a pittance. In the city the price of foodstuffs was manipulated by the money-minded merchants and often rose alarmingly so that migrants from the countryside were no strangers to days of hunger and nights of sleeping in the open.

Issa carried the extra burden of coming from an area so rural that its inhabitants were discriminated against as 'country yokels'. The nickname most commonly given to them was mukudori.⁷² This nickname later came to mean 'sucker' or 'easy prey'⁷³ but was originally used to describe country people of the snowy parts of Japan who left the farms to reduce the number of mouths to feed. The real meaning of the word mukudori is 'starling'. The drifters from the countryside were thus compared to flocks of starlings which, unable to find food in the snowy regions, descended upon Edo to 'pick up crumbs' and then return home when the snows had thawed.⁷⁴

Since their stay in Edo was inevitably temporary they did not belong. They were treated as outsiders and as a sub-standard element. Mukudori was a strong derogatory term. That Issa was thus designated is illustrated in this verse of his;

Mukudori to hito ni yobaruru samusa kana.⁷⁵

Sold

Criticism rained upon me by another,

On the open road

I am called 'starling'.

It was against this background of loneliness, hardship and discrimination in Edo that Issa learned his early haiku. The number of literate citizens increased rapidly from the beginning of the Edo era and many with a natural gift with words, as Issa undoubtedly had, attempted to write haiku or the more comic, sometimes bawdy senryū verse.⁷⁶ Issa at this time had no other

skills by which to support himself and with his natural gift with words, chose the path of haiku as his life's work.

As mentioned previously, Issa was able to both read and write and was not a complete stranger to haiku verse before coming to Edo. He had met the poet Jackuo when a child and was to meet him again when he visited the town of Onomichi whilst on his journey to the western regions of Japan, and again in his patron Seibi's home. Jackuo eventually retired to Kashiwabara and died there while Issa, too, was present in the village.⁷⁷ The fact that Issa makes no mention of this poet's death in his diaries is a clear indication that there was never any teacher-disciple relationship between them and that Issa had had no real training in the haiku art before coming to Edo. We must therefore assume that when he started out seriously upon the haiku path it was as a complete novice.

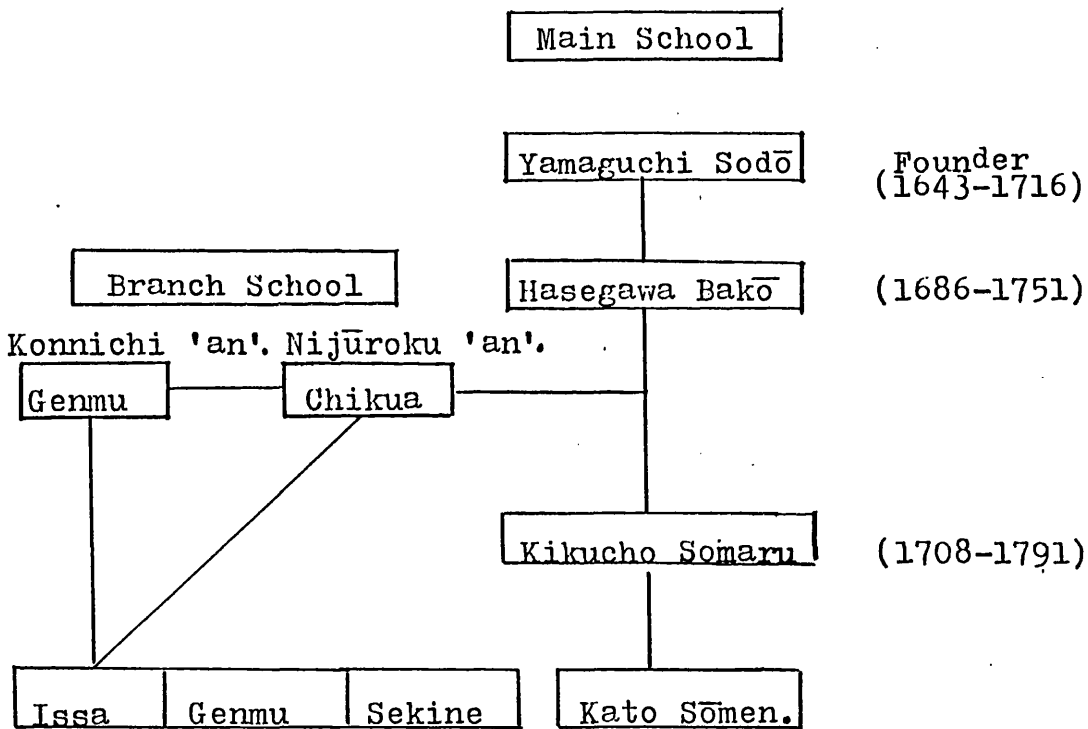
Just where and when Issa had his first contacts with Edo haiku poets is still unknown. The most appropriate way to approach the ten years previous to 1787 is to work backwards from the first reasonably reliable historical data that we have.

Issa attached himself to a school of haiku known as the Katsushika school, named after the home region of its founder Yamaguchi Sodō, a disciple and friend of the great haiku master Bashō.⁷⁸ In this respect it was a conventional school seeking to maintain the traditions of Bashō style haiku, though stylistically somewhat rustic, with its base in rural districts east of the

capital rather than within Edo itself. The two main areas of its influence were the regions of Shimosa and Kazusa, parts of present day Chiba prefecture.⁷⁹

Coming from a farming household himself Issa would have been naturally attracted to a school that had its base in rural areas.. By Issa's time the Katsushika school had developed a branch or sub-school, and it was with this branch school that Issa seems to have made his first contact.⁸⁰

The following simplified diagram illustrates the development of the Katsushika school of haiku poetry;⁸¹



An can be translated as 'hermitage', 'cottage', or 'retreat' and was used to describe the residence of a poet, usually a master poet.

Issa is recorded as a disciple of Genmu in the Katsushika records.⁸² He also referred to himself as a student under Genmu. Later, in 1812, Issa cooperated in an effort to restore the Konnichi poetic residence, the branch of the

Katsushika school that Genmu had founded.⁸³ Such action is also indicative that there was a teacher-disciple relationship between them. Furthermore, in haiku collections edited by Genmu, there are some poems by a poet named Kikumei, who is almost certainly Issa, Kikumei being one of the pen names that Issa used before finally deciding on 'Issa'.⁸⁴

The first recorded poems by 'Kikumei' are in a work named Haikai Gojūsan Tsugi. This is a collection of verses edited by Genmu and dated 1788, when Issa was twenty five years old. Among them is this verse;

Koke no hana kokizu ni saku ya ishi jizō.

Moss flowers

Blooming forth from the small cracks

In the stone image

Of the buddha, Guardian of Children.⁸⁵

It is not absolutely certain that 'Kikumei' is in fact Issa,⁸⁶ but that he used this pen name is recorded in the annals of the Katsushika school.⁸⁷

Also, later in Issa's works we find this poem;

Ojizō no hiza mo me mo hana mo koke no hana.⁸⁸

The moss flowers

From the knees, the eyes, the nose too,

Of the little stone image

Of the buddha, Guardian of Children.

The similarity of these verses adds weight to the theory that the earlier verse is indeed by Issa. This would mean that by the age of twenty five Issa was already a promising young poet and that, prior to his twenty fifth birthday he had joined a group of young aspirants studying

under Genmu. It may also be assumed that for him to have verses included in collections by Genmu at the age of twenty five, he would in fact have been studying under Genmu from before his twenty fourth birthday.

By the time he was twenty six he had begun to have verses published in collections by Genmu under the name of Issa. For example;

89

Sawagashiki yo o oshiyatte osozakura.

In a hurry

Pushing all the world aside,

Late blooming cherry blossoms.

Later Issa recorded the reason for choosing his final pen-name;

"Meandering to the west, wandering to the east, a man out of his mind. Tomorrow he will eat in Kazusa and in the evening lodge in Musashino. Like the white-capped waves which know no resting place, the foam rising only to fade away so easily, I will call myself Issa."90

The word Issa is not an easy one to translate. It consists of the two Chinese characters for 'one' — and 'tea' 茶, but this hardly brings out the meaning that Issa seems to have intended, for he likened himself to the quickly dispersing froth which appears momentarily when good tea is made. 91 It seems rather that he chose this name to give a sense of transience, worthlessness, and constant change.

The section translated above indicates that by the time Issa was twenty six years old he was already living as a travelling poet in the rural districts where the Katsushika school had its base. This being so, it is quite likely that he was studying under Genmu as early as 1785/6 when he was between the ages of twenty two and

twenty three.

By the age of twenty seven Issa had risen to the position of shippitsu under Genmu.⁹² This assumes an apprenticeship of several years at least. Shippitsu or hanja, which can be translated as 'marker', was a position given to promising poets. The shippitsu was appointed by the master poet to record poems and act as a judge or marker at poetry gatherings and contests where awards of cash or kind were given to those whose verses were considered to be most skillful.⁹³ It was a position of recognized responsibility and accomplishment. This, too, also strongly indicates that Issa entered the world of organized haiku at least as early as his twenty third birthday, and that he had made considerable effort to master the haiku art even before this.

In this way, working back from historically reliable evidence, we can, with some confidence, make these basic assumptions concerning at least the last few years of the ten year blank in his early life in Edo.

Among the poets studying under Genmu at the same time as Issa was a man named Ōgawa Heizaemon, who used the pen-name Ryūsa.⁹⁴ In complete contrast to Issa, this man was a rich merchant. He was an older man than Issa and had attained the rank of shippitsu in 1783, when Issa was twenty years old.⁹⁵ From the very beginning of his association with Genmu, Issa was a recipient of Ryūsa's kindness.⁹⁶ Issa, during his lifetime, was to have many acquaintances but very few real friends. He received patronage from some, advice from many, but real friend-

ship from only a few. Ryūsa belonged among the few real friends. Issa spoke of this man with real affection thus;

"Since I first started out along the path of haiku Ryūsa has been more than just a friend. At the end of March I set out along the Mikoshi road, heading for places I had not yet visited, wishing to reach Ariso. Ryūsa accompanied me as far as the town of Takenohana;

Imasara ni wakare tomo nashi harugasumi.

Now,

Less than ever,

Do I want to say farewell.

Spring mists. Issa.

Matashite no hanami mo inochi narikeri.

Together

Once more we will view the cherry blossoms,

If fate permits. Ryusa.

I looked back at the form of my old friend standing there. He seemed more dear to me than ever. I went on and travelled in the surrounding provinces while summer and autumn passed by. Eventually, I returned to his home town, rejoicing in the prospect of a pleasant reunion with him, only to spend a short time looking into the ashen face of my old friend, who was sick unto death. Was it the Buddha himself who had brought us together? For what a friendship was ours!

Ro no hata ya yobe no warai ga itomagoi.

At the hearthside last night

The smile upon his face

Was his last farewell." 97

This extract reveals just how close their friendship was and how much this man meant to Issa as a friend. Local tradition in and around Mabashi, where Ryūsa lived, maintains to this day that Issa served some of his apprenticeship in his early years in the employ of this man, and that it was Ryūsa who encouraged him in the haiku art and later suggested that he aim at becoming a haiku

master poet and thereby earn his living through his art.⁹⁸

There is no tangible evidence to support this kind of prior relationship between the two, but this local tradition has given rise to what is one of the more tenable theories concerning Issa's early years in and around Edo before he reached the age of twenty four.

Issa's early affiliation with the Katsushika school was not confined to one master poet, or to one group of poets. As the previous diagram indicates, in addition to being among the group of poets who studied under Genmu, Issa also studied under the master poet Chikua.⁹⁹

Furthermore, the name Kobayashi Ikyō is given as the name of the copyist of a book of linked verse dated 1787. The name of this work is the Hakusajinshū. This is a work handed down from the time of Bashō, which contains instruction in the traditional concepts of linked haiku verse. It has been doubted that Kobayashi Ikyō was in fact Issa because the penmanship seems quite different to that of Issa's later work, but most scholars consider Kobayashi Ikyō to be Issa, e.g. Maruyama p.24, Kuriyama, Buson; Issa Nihon Koten vol 32. p.238, Takai p.65.

Issa himself refers to Chikua as his teacher in the preface to his own copy of the book of instructions handed down from the founder of the Katsushika school to Chikua, who in turn handed it to Issa for him to make his own copy. The name of this work was Kanakuketsu. It is included, along with the preface in the Complete Works of Issa.¹⁰⁰

Issa later attempted a selection of verses as a

memorial volume upon Chikua's death in 1790, an indication of a master-disciple relationship.

In 1787, when Issa copied the Hakusajinshū, he was twenty four years old. We can therefore assume with even more certainty that Issa was following the haiku path as a fully committed novice from around the age of twenty three.¹⁰¹

Chikua was a poet who believed strongly that each poet should be encouraged to develop his own style freely. He taught that poets should understand and master the styles of previous great poets, but that they should not be imitators or propagators of any particular school of poetry as such, or form a group of disciples committed to the purity and furtherance of any one style.¹⁰²¹⁰³

After Chikua's death, Issa, attached himself, from April 1790, to Somaru the leader of the main branch of the Katsushika school, and very quickly became his shippitsu. Issa was then only twenty seven years of age.¹⁰⁴

One other theory concerning Issa's early years deserves attention because it suggests that Issa was a travelling novice-poet well before he was twenty five years of age.¹⁰⁵ This theory is based on the fact that in the Chichi no Shūen Nikki Issa mentioned that he visited the Tōhoku region, including some of the places immortalized by their inclusion in Bashō's most famous work The Narrow Road to the North.¹⁰⁶ It was every young haiku poet's dream to literally follow in the steps of the great master Bashō.¹⁰⁷ Issa's words in the above mentioned work are;

"....after I left Kashiwabara aged fourteen...
 From this time on I travelled all over the land,
 wandering under the moon at Matsushima in the east
 and being rained upon by the cherry blossoms in
 Yoshino in the west."¹⁰⁸

Issa's visits to Yoshino in Nara prefecture are well
 recorded in his work ¹⁰⁹ but there is no mention of any
 visit to Matsushima, one of the places made famous by
 Bashō's visit. Issa's movements are well recorded from
 the time he was twenty seven years old until the time of
 his death. The Chichi no Shūen Nikki was written when
 Issa was thirty eight years old. ¹¹⁰ There seems no other
 explanation than to suggest that Issa actually visited
 the Tōhoku region prior to the time he joined the group
 of poets under Somaru.

The possibility of this theory being correct is . .
 reinforced by the fact that in the Kansei Kuchō, which
 Issa wrote when he was twenty nine years old, or which
 at least was first drafted then, ¹¹¹ we find the following
 poems;

Matsushima ya hotaru ga tame no ichi ri tsuka. ¹¹²

Matsushima at night!

Like milestones

For the fireflies.

Matsushima ya mitsu yotsu homete tsuki o mata. ¹¹³

Matsushima!

Sing the praises

Of three isles or four

And then the moon!

These verses are written in a way that strongly
 suggests personal observation. If this were not so

they would be the only exceptions in this collection of verses. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that Issa made a journey to the northeast before the age of twenty nine, when the Kansei Kuchō was written. This being so it is more likely that his journey, if he made one, was made before he began studying under Genmu and Chikua, i.e. before he was twenty four years old. The fact that he was still a novice at this time may well account for the fact that only two of his verses remain as a result of this journey.

This concludes the major theories concerning Issa's early life in Edo. Little is certain apart from the generalization that Issa embarked upon the serious study of haiku poetry from the position of a wandering labourer, or at best, an apprentice to a merchant. Life in Edo had been hard for him and the way of haiku offered to one with his talent for words a means of livelihood and a way of personal fulfillment.

There were different kinds of haiku poet. There were those for whom haiku verse was a hobby, an artistic pastime, at which they were recognised as proficient. These were generally rich merchants or buddhist priests whose incomes and livelihoods were assured because of their business and profession, men like Seibi,¹¹⁴ Ryūsa¹¹⁵ or Ippyō¹¹⁶ for example. There were others who had left the life of samurai or other recognised positions, to devote themselves to the haiku art, for example, Jackuo who¹¹⁷ was from the military caste and Michihiko who was a physician. Many of these were supported by patrons and could earn their living as artists, calligraphers

or teachers of the martial arts if they needed to. They were not absolutely dependent upon haiku poetry for the necessities of life.

Then there were those, like Issa, whose only source of income was from haiku and who were not well known or famous. Poets like Issa, without fame or the friendship of those who would help them from the time they chose to dedicate themselves to haiku, were almost completely dependent upon the patronage and kindness of others. Theirs was a precarious existence, at times literally beggarly. They often did odd jobs around the homes of poets who were merchants and who became their patrons by temporarily feeding and housing them.¹¹⁸ Only success at being recognised as a master poet, and consequently receiving support from disciples and aspirants in positions of wealth, could deliver them from lives of constant poverty, hardship and dependence upon others. It was this path that Issa chose and it seems likely that he had committed himself to this goal by the time he was twenty three years of age.

It was thought until 1983¹¹⁹ that Issa moved into the Nijūrokuan in 1787 when Chikua moved to Ōsaka because up until 1983 it was thought that Chikua never returned to Edo and died in Ōsaka in 1790. For this reason some have theorized that, because Issa was only twenty four years of age in 1787, he became a 'caretaker' resident poet.¹²⁰ The period of Chikua's stay in Ōsaka is not yet known, but Mr. Inoue Shūnosuke, the haiku researcher who discovered the evidence of Chikua's death in Edo,

considers Chikua to have returned to Edo later in 1787. (See article on page 42).

Chikua had long been associated with the Katsushika school. He had been a disciple of Bakō¹²¹ and had worked hard for the prosperity of the Katsushika school. He was a quiet, reserved man who spent much of his time travelling in the rural districts of the Katsushika region. He spent very little time in Edo itself.¹²² Issa respected him greatly and possessed copies of some of his works. He also made a list of all his works and planned to publish a collection of verses in his memory.¹²³

From the time of Chikua's death in 1790, when Issa began to study under Somaru, Issa's life can be traced with more certainty. From this time on his verses occasionally appeared in Katsushika verse collections. For example;

Kankodori hiru ushimitsu no yamaji kana.¹²⁴

Nine o'clock in the morning

Upon a mountain path,

The cuckoo cries.

Sanmon ga kiri mi ni keri tomegane.¹²⁵

Seen through the telescope,

Three pennyworth

Of mist!

Yamadera ya yuki no soko naru kane no koe.¹²⁶

The mountain temple,

Its bell resounding

From the depths of snow.

Ima made wa fumarete ita ni hana no kana.¹²⁷

Flowers!

And I had till now

Been trampling over them!

Shiohama ya hago ni shite tobu chidori kana.¹²⁸

The tide-washed beach

His runway,

The snipe takes off!!

He was by this time shippitsu for Somaru, and it was from this responsibility that he asked leave to return to Kashiwabara to visit his father after an absence of some fifteen years.

Footnote to chapter one ,section 2.

In March of 1983 a report of a discovery by haiku researcher Inoue Shūnosuke was published in the Asahi newspaper. This report casts more light upon the relationship between Issa and Chikua. Inoue had in 1982 searched temples in Ōsaka looking for some record of Chikua's death, but without success. Shortly after this he was in a temple in the Kuramae district of Tōkyō when he stumbled on an entry in the temple records concerning Chikua's death. The name of this temple, the Chōōin, is found in Issa's records in the Bunka Kuchō, Comp. Works vol.2 p.343, where Issa records;

"13th. Visited Chōōin for the 17th. anniversary of Chikua's death."

This was written under the date 13th. March 1806. The record in the Chōōin temple of Chikua's death reveals the following facts;

- (i). Chikua's given name was Kobayashi Rakusai.
- (ii). Chikua died in Edo, at the age of eighty, in 1790.

This means that although Chikua went to Ōsaka in 1787,

he later returned to Edo. Inoue proposes that Chikua returned to Edo in the spring of 1787 and spent his last three years there. This would mean that Issa continued to study under Chikua and own him as his teacher for the years 1787-1790, when Issa was between the ages of twenty four and twenty seven. Whether Chikua did in actual fact return to Edo in 1787 is not yet proven, but that Issa was his pupil until his death in 1790, remains a fact. It also means that when Chikua died, Issa was elected to be his successor by Chikua himself, and that Issa did not simply use his association with Chikua to further his own poetic career and assume the leadership of the Nijūrokuan branch of the Katsushika school. At twenty seven years of age Issa did in actual fact become the master of the Nijūrokuan poetic residence.

This does not alter the fact that Issa was not truly recognised as such by the main-stream Katsushika school for he still became shippitsu under Somaru in 1790,¹²⁹ but it does refute the theory¹³⁰ that Issa made his journey into western Japan in an attempt to verify his own claim to be Chikua's successor. (see Kaneko p.43).

It was rather a demonstration of his respect for Chikua and a means of self introduction, as Chikua's nominated successor, to a great number of poets in western Japan who recognised and respected Chikua as master and fellow-poet, as well as a poetic discipline for the young and relatively inexperienced Issa.

The full text of Inoue Shūnosuke's article is found overleaf.

と、「二六庵一茶」の称は正当なもので、決して身勝手な自称ではなかつたことなぐ、長い間取りざたされてきた一連の疑問をすべて解決してくれた。

考証の過程は省略するが、おそらく老竹阿は天明七年の春ごろ江戸に帰り住み、約三年江戸で最晩年を過ごしたものと見られる。その間一茶は竹阿の身辺にあつて親しく俳諧を弄び、竹阿の後継者に選ばれたのである。

この過去帳は、これまで消息不明であつた一茶の青年期に一条の光をあて、一茶の伝記に多

茶研究に新資料

東京に師、竹阿の過去帳



井上 修之介

門の振興の立場にあったが、六十歳を過ぎたころ事情あつて大阪へ移住し、二十年ばかり浪華の俳壇で活躍、寛政二年三月十三日に八十五歳が、専門家はいづれもこれを疑

これらの事情から、一茶が竹先般、はからずも東京蔵前にある長虎院という寺で、竹阿の過去世を見つけたのである。この長虎院は、一茶が『文化

没す」と明記されている竹阿弥が、実は江戸本所の竹屋弥兵衛方で没し、この長尾院に葬られていたのである。この記事は、

九三三年生まれ。和歌山大学経済学部卒。会社勤務を経て俳諧・俳句の研究・著述に専ら。著書に『茶漂泊』など。俳文学会会員、『岬』同人。

近い近衛で没したとされる。多くの業績をもつ著名な非人だが、俗事を捨てた隠士であったためか、姓名・年齢などについては正確な記録がない。

問視する。竹阿が江戸から大阪へ移住したのは明和四年、一茶五歳の年であつて、一茶が江戸へ出た時すでに竹阿は上方へ去つていた。その後竹阿が江戸へ

句帖」の文化三年三月十三日の
十三日　むら雨　南風吹　竹
長閑庵に参る

一茶が竹阿に正式に師事したと

慧照大姉
二月
七日

水野平八郎

一茶の竹阿師事を要ける資料としては、一茶が二十五歳の年に筆寫した連歌の秘書「白砂入塵」の奥書に、

天明七申賀月廿日

旅した形跡はなく、後年一茶が西國を行脚したのは竹阿の没後であつたから、一茶は竹阿と對面する機会さえなかつたことになる。このため一茶は正式に

古き日を憂ふ、なとや極晩と書き記している寺であるが、所在が不明のため調査が及ばなかつたのである。現住谷口一祐師のご協力を得て見つけ

見菴了山

卷之十
三月
三月

林樂齋

292

小林 正樹

私淑してただけで、二六庵くつかえす意外な巨額が残され

二六 阿の近き朝（中世）

10

19

3. First Return to Kashiwabara.

Issa was almost twenty eight years old when he made his first journey back to Kashiwabara. His journey back is related in his work 'Kansei Sannen Kikō'.¹³¹ He does not record his motive for returning home at this time. The closest hint that we have concerning any motive are these words;

"With a new wicker hat upon my head, my future brighter and with my bamboo staff in my hand, I leave Edo on the sixteenth day of March 1791 and set out upon my way home".¹³²

Issa's meaning is not very clear, but it seems he was going home in good spirits after having attained a place of some modest distinction in his particular school of haiku. It is stated elsewhere that he asked for and received thirty days leave of absence to go and visit his father whom he had seen unwell in a dream.¹³³ If this is true, it seems strange that he went on a roundabout way through Shimosa, which is in almost the opposite direction to Shinano. It is possible that such a diversion was forced upon him by economic necessity, for poets like Issa could only raise funds for travelling by receiving gifts from fellow poets and small fees for judging poetry contests etc. He may have needed to go through Shimosa to raise the minimum funds needed for the journey home.

Issa found his parents in good health. It seems that the 'dream' was just a device Issa used to obtain leave from Somaru. It may have been that Issa wished to see his father this particular year because he had just

turned sixty years of age, a time which was traditionally thought of as the beginning of old age.¹³⁴ The year he returned home was not a particular memorial year for either his deceased mother or grandmother. Memorial years for Buddhists in Japan are the first, second, seventh, thirteenth, twenty third, twenty seventh, thirty third, fiftieth and hundredth years after death. It was twenty six years since his mother died and sixteen years since his grandmother's death. Because he did not stay in Kashiwabara for more than a few months it is unlikely that the motive for his visit was to attend memorial services for either his mother or his grandmother.

Issa left Edo on the 26th. of March 1791 and headed for Shimosa. On the 8th. of April he returned to Edo and then set out again, this time for Kashiwabara, on the 10th. of April. He arrived in Kashiwabara early in the evening of the 18th. of April just as the lamps were being lit in the village houses.¹³⁵ He wrote of his arrival;

"How happy I was to see the faces of my dear parents, and how worthwhile I felt the journey was. For a little while I was left quite speechless.

¹³⁶
Kado no ki mo matsu tsutsu ganashi yusuzumi.

The same old pine tree,

Waiting there at the gate

In the cool of the evening.¹³⁷

This piece of prose and the accompanying verse marks the end of the record of his journey.

The exact length of Issa's stay in Kashiwabara is not known but by the summer of the same year he was back in

138
Shimosa.

4. His Journey into Western Japan.

After this short visit home Issa returned to Edo, but within one year of his return to the great city he set out upon a journey that was to last six years, and which was to take him all over Shikoku and the western regions of Japan.¹³⁹

This poetic pilgrimage, in the footsteps of his revered teacher Chikua, was to expose the young Issa to a great many experienced haiku poets and many different styles of haiku verse. It was a journey made in order to gain experience and training and was to be the beginning of the laying of a foundation upon which he was to develop his later style.¹⁴⁰

The fact that Issa set off on such a long journey so soon after arriving back in Edo suggests that this journey was planned, or at least conceived, before he returned home to Kashiwabara, and that the journey to Kashiwabara itself was part of his preparation for this longer journey. Knowing that he would not see his parents again for another six years or so, he decided to visit them before he set out.

Issa left Edo on the 25th. of March 1792, a little less than two months before his twenty ninth birthday. The reasons suggested for this journey are fourfold.
(a).

Issa's father had asked him to make a pilgrimage on his behalf to the Nishi Hongan Temple in Kyōto.¹⁴¹ This temple was, and still is, the main sanctuary and headquarters of the Jōdo Shinshū (Pure Land) Buddhist

sect, to which the Kobayashi family adhered. In many parts of Japan a pilgrimage to this temple at least once in a believer's lifetime was considered an act of piety which, while not obligatory, meant that those who were either unwilling or unable to make it, were stigmatized as 'useless' or 'unworthy'.¹⁴² This reason for at least the first part of the journey is recorded in the Issa Ō Shūenki.¹⁴³

It is more likely, however, that upon hearing of Issa's plan to make a journey to the west, his father asked him to include a visit to the Nishi Hongan Temple on his behalf.

(b).

A more general reason suggested for this journey is that Issa wished to make a poetic pilgrimage in the footsteps of his previous teacher who had many friends, fellow poets and admirers in Shikoku and the western regions, in order to introduce himself as Chikua's¹⁴⁴ elected successor.

(c).

A third suggested reason is that Issa, as merely the 'caretaker' resident poet in the place of Chikua, needed to authenticate this position by undertaking this journey. By doing this he would gain the necessary experience and the support of Chikua's admirers and fellow poets in order to win recognition as Chikua's successor in the fullest sense as an¹⁴⁵ accomplished haiku poet. Inoue Shūnosuke's discovery of the record of Chikua's death in Edo in 1790 now

invalidates this theory in the strictest sense, but the general argument that Issa needed experience before his general acceptance in Edo remains valid.

(d).

A fourth suggested reason for the journey is that Issa was finding his farming background and the prejudice against it a formidable obstacle to further progress in the Katsushika school.¹⁴⁶ The Katsushika school, though having its base in the rural areas east of Edo and considered somewhat rustic, was founded and traditionally led by poets from the samurai strata of Tokugawa society.¹⁴⁷ Almost all the poets of importance in the Katsushika school were of military background and they monopolized its positions of esteem and leadership. This, to Issa, appears to have been a formidable barrier to his acceptance and progress within its ranks.

Issa, in Edo, was considered a vagrant rather than a farmer. He was neither military, agricultural, artisan or merchant. He did not fit into any of the four divisions of Tokugawa society. He was little more than a vagrant poet seeking to scrape out a living through his art. He was a member of the class of poet known as gyōhai¹⁴⁸ i.e. one who sought to make a living through haiku verse and who had no other means by which to support himself. The word gyōhai consists of the two Chinese characters for business or trade, 業, and 俳, the first half of the word haiku.

His ability at haiku verse was all he had, and as a peasant from the depths of the countryside his progress

in the Katsushika school would not depend upon his poetic genius alone; without some kind of social standing he could never be accepted in Katsushika ranks as a master poet.

It has been suggested by Maruyama¹⁴⁹ that Issa realised this and had come to the conclusion that while the Katsushika school with its rural base was the ideal place for him to begin in, it offered only limited opportunity for the development of his poetic gifts and the attainment of his goal. The samurai heritage of the leadership of the Katsushika school limited his progress and acceptance.

Though constantly nursing a feeling of inferiority, Issa¹⁵⁰ was a strong willed personality. His departure from Edo and consequent distance from the poetic base of the Katsushika school should not be considered without the possibility of it being his reaction against the social stigma he experienced within the Katsushika school.

It is quite likely that a combination of all these suggested reasons resulted in his decision to depart from Edo. He left the city in March 1792.¹⁵¹

Free from the style and company of one particular school Issa was now to be exposed to the style of many, and in being so he was to begin to cultivate that distinctive style of his own for which he has since become famous. Also, in following the footsteps of his teacher Chikua, he was indeed following his teaching and philosophy of the way of the poet. He was to meet many

admirers and former pupils of Chikua and be received kindly by most of them in memory of, and through respect for, their former teacher.¹⁵²

Issa set out during cherry blossom time in Edo. His head was shaven in the manner of the Buddhist priest and he wore a priest's garments. Upon his shaven head he wore a broad wicker hat and in his hand he carried a staff. This was the norm for the poet-pilgrim, as indeed it was for many travelling alone. The garb of a poor mendicant priest offered a safer way to travel and increased the possibility of receiving kindnesses on the way.¹⁵³ His parting verses upon setting out from Edo were;

Sori sutete hanami no mane ya hinoki kasa.¹⁵⁴

As if to view the cherry blossoms

I set out upon my journey,

Wicker hat

Upon my freshly shaven head.

Itsu awan mi wa shiranu hi no togasumi.¹⁵⁵

Not knowing if

Or when we will meet again,

I set out

Heading for the far off mists.

These two verses reflect something of his feelings as he set out upon this, probably his first, and definitely his longest poetic pilgrimage. This journey was to take him to the Kansai, Shikoku, Chugoku and Kyūshū regions of Japan. He was to dine in a castle, rest and lodge in famous temples, see the foreign settlements in Nagasaki and visit holiest of all Shinto shrines, the shrine at

Ise. He was to know the lonely mountain pathway, the busy thoroughfare, the humble inn, the rich man's house, the warm welcome and the closed door. But above all else he was to taste a variety and wealth of poetic experience that was to leave its mark upon him for the rest of his days.

His own records of part of this journey are the Kansei Kuchō and the Saigoku Kikō.¹⁵⁶ The former is a collection of poems made during the first three years of the journey and the latter is a record covering three months of the fourth year and contains both prose and poetry.

Among the poets that Issa met while on this journey were Rankō¹⁵⁷ and Jukō¹⁵⁸, who were both poets of the Bashō style, Gekkyō¹⁵⁹, a disciple of Buson, and Jōsa¹⁶⁰, all of whom were poets of the Bashō Restoration Movement in Kyōto.¹⁶¹ Other famous poets he met and stayed with were Ōemaru¹⁶² and Shōroku¹⁶³ of Ōsaka and Jiryū¹⁶⁴ of Hyōgo. At Iyo he stayed for many days with the rich merchant-poet Kurita Chodō, for whom he developed a strong affection.¹⁶⁵

For Issa, a little known poet with a farming background to have spent so much time with highly respected and well known poets attests to more appreciation of him on their part than their acceptance of him merely out of respect for Chikua alone. That Issa was able to mix well with these poets, among whom were rich merchants, priests of famous temples and others of high social standing, provides evidence that Issa had learned the art of amiable companionship. That he himself had

affection for some of these men beyond the bounds of mere respect is shown by the way he later mourned the passing of some of them. For example, when Kurita Chodō died Issa wrote;

Tazunete mo yo no naka wa nashi yamazakura. ¹⁶⁶

Though I search and search for it

Nowhere in all the world

Can it be found,

Mountain cherry blossoms.

In this verse Issa expresses powerfully the thought that he had lost someone who, though he searched diligently and long, could never be replaced.

Issa had obviously given thought to the ethics of the hospitality he received on such journeys for in a note in the Saigoku Kikō he recorded

"Even though one may stay for many days in one place, if when the time comes to depart, one stays longer, it is a serious abuse of courtesy." ¹⁶⁷

On this journey he did not always receive hospitality. He also knew the hardships of travel, as these verse, from among others like them, reveal.

Samuki yo ya waga mi ware ga nezu no ban. ¹⁶⁸

The cold night,

I myself am my own

Unsleeping watchman.

Ware sukite ware suru tabi no samusa kana. ¹⁶⁹

This journey I chose

This journey I make,

But oh, how cold it is. ¹⁷⁰

He knew times of cold and hunger for he records how

"..even the very fragrance of the ears of rice in the fields seemed to waft into my empty stomach" ¹⁷¹

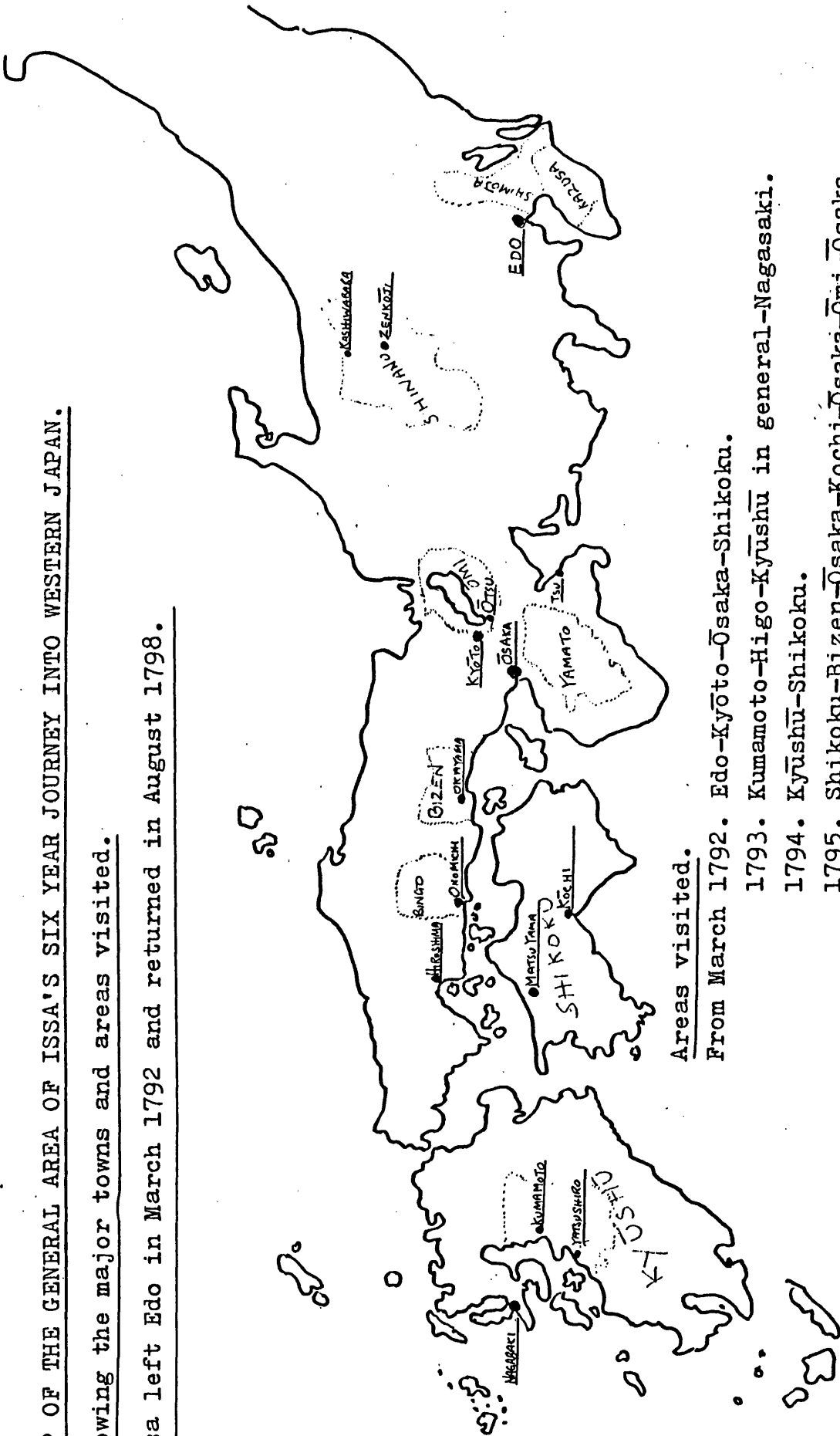
The following two maps show the general outline of the six year journey (first map) and the details of his time in Shikoku and his return to Ōsaka in the first four months of 1795 (second map).

The details of the second map are further outlined on the page which follows it.

MAP OF THE GENERAL AREA OF ISSA'S SIX YEAR JOURNEY INTO WESTERN JAPAN.

Showing the major towns and areas visited.

Issa left Edo in March 1792 and returned in August 1798.



Areas visited.

From March 1792. Edo-Kyoto-Osaka-Shikoku.

1793. Kumamoto-Higo-Kyushu in general-Nagasaki.

1794. Kyushu-Shikoku.

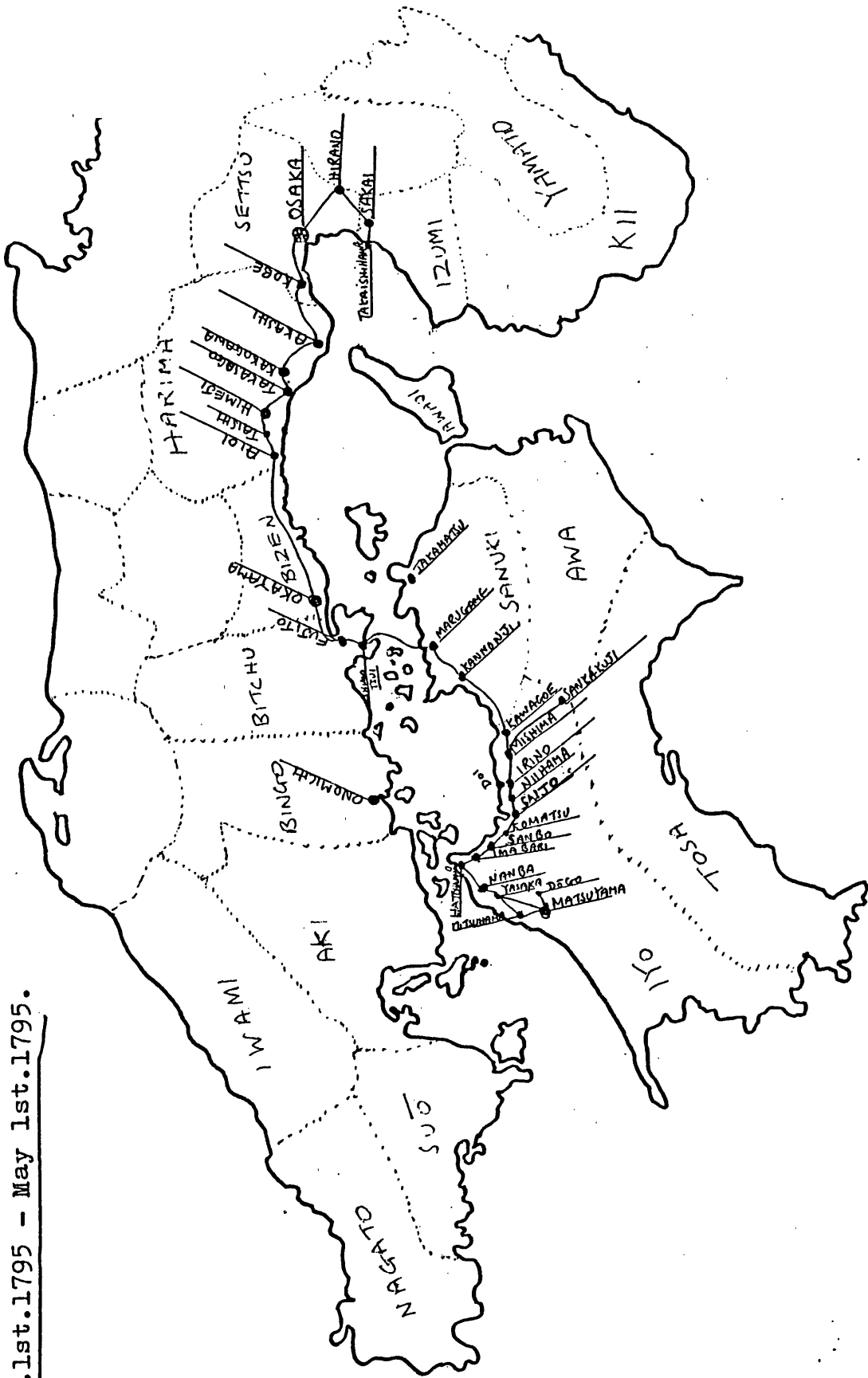
1795. Shikoku-Bizen-Osaka-Kochi-Osaka-Omi-Osaka.

1796. Shikoku.

1797. Bingo-Osaka and districts.

Till Aug. 1798. Yamato-Kyoto-Otsu-Omi-Kashiwabara-Edo.

Jan. 1st. 1795 - May 1st. 1795.



Details of Issa's journey related in the Saigoku Kikō.¹⁷³
 Jan. 1st - May 1st. 1795.

Jan. 1st. At Kannonji in Sanuki province.

8th. Left Kannonji by ship.

9th. Arrived at Irino.

10th. Stayed at Niihama.

11th. " " Sambo.

12th. " " Imabaru.

13th. " " Saimyō temple, Hatto.

14th. " " Yasaka.

15th. Visited Sodō at Matsuyama.

16th. Viewed cherry blossoms at Matsuyama.

Feb. 1st. At Dogo hot springs.

5th. Departed from Matsuyama. Stayed at Mitsuhamma.

11th. Stayed at Yasaka.

14th. " " Hatto.

19th. " " Sambo.

20th. Viewed cherry blossoms at Jippo temple near

25th. Stayed at Irino. Sambo.

27th. " " Doi.

28th. Visited the Sankaku temple and the Mishima
 shrine.

Mar. 8th. Took boat from Marugame. Arrived at Shimotsui
 in Bizen province

9th. Travelled to Fujito and then on to Okayama.

12th. Stayed at farmhouse in Taishi.

13th. Visited Himeji castle and surrounding
 districts.

16th. Stayed at Kakogawa.

17th. Travelled from Kakogawa through Akashi, Kōbe
 and then on to Ōsaka.

27th. Stayed at Tenno temple in Ōsaka. Visited
 Hirano.

Apr. 9th. Stayed at Sakai.

May 1st. Stayed at Takaishihama.

In March of 1792 Issa followed the main Tōkaidō road from Edo to Kyōto.¹⁷⁴ After visiting the Hongan temple on behalf of his father he travelled on to Ōsaka then west to Yoshino. He crossed over to Shikoku where there were many friends and former pupils of Chikua.

He arrived in Shikoku in the autumn of 1792 and went to the Sennen temple in the town of Kannonji, where the poet-priest Wako resided. This poet had been a disciple of Chikua under the name of Goume.¹⁷⁵ Issa and this poet became good friends, and using the Sennen temple as his base Issa travelled throughout Shikoku.

Towards the end of this year Issa travelled further west to Higo province in Kyūshū and on New Year's Day was at the Seikyo temple in the town of Yatsushiro, where he stayed for the New Year festivities.¹⁷⁶ While here he gathered some twenty verses for inclusion in his first collection of the verses of other poets, the Tabishui.¹⁷⁷ His relationship with Chikua aided him much here.

He next moved on to Nagasaki where his previous relationship with Chikua again stood him in good stead. After travelling around northeast Kyūshū, he crossed back to the main island again and made his way up the coast and back to Shikoku, while calling on haiku poets on the way. In Onomichi he met again the poet Jackuo who had stayed in Kashiwabara when Issa was a child.¹⁷⁸

It was from Onomichi that Issa crossed over the Inland Sea to Shikoku again. The details of the following four months have been set out on page 56. In the autumn of that year (1795) Issa was still on Shikoku

and staying in the town of Matsuyama. It was here that he stayed with the rich and influential wine merchant, Kurita Chodō.

Matsuyama was a castle town, the seat of the local daimyō Matsudaira Sadanao. The daimyō was himself a keen haiku poet in the Bashō style and consequently the whole town of Matsuyama was something of a haiku centre.¹⁷⁹ It was probably through the introduction of Kurita Chodō that Issa was invited to take part in a poetry gathering inside the castle itself.¹⁸⁰

Issa and Kurita Chodō spent much time together. They composed at least seven linked verse sequences together and Issa used this man's home as his base during this period in Shikoku.¹⁸¹

Through the friendship of this one man alone Issa found acceptance with many poets on the Shikoku island. Issa continued a correspondence with him for twenty years after this visit, up until the time Kurita Chodō died at the age of sixty six in 1814. Issa wrote at that time;

182

Kono sugi wa waga mi no ue ka naku karasu.

Will it be

Over me

That next

The crow will caw?

Issa left Matsuyama, crossed over to the mainland by way of the port town of Marugame, passed through Okayama and made his way along the coast road to Ōsaka, a journey of ten days. His base in Ōsaka was the home of the poet Shōroku.¹⁸³ Issa was introduced to many other

poets in Ōsaka and the surrounding regions through this man. Among them was Rankō¹⁸⁴, a famous poet who was well known, even in Edo.

Still during 1795 Issa went on to Kyōto where he arranged for the publication of his collection of verses the Tabishui.¹⁸⁵ He then ventured into Ōmi province, (modern Shiga prefecture), where he visited Gitchūji, a place that Bashō often visited and which, since his death, has become a memorial to him. It is a small enclosure (20x30 yards) in which lives, to this day, a haiku poet-priest, and where haiku is taught and regularly composed. It is now part of the modern city of Ōtsu.¹⁸⁶

After returning to Ōsaka, Issa went back to Shikoku where he spent the year 1796. Early in 1797 he crossed back to the mainland yet again, and after revisiting Hiroshima he returned along the coast road to Ōsaka and travelled in the surrounding Yamato district (modern Nara prefecture). It was during this year that he met and composed poetry with the famous poet Ōemaru.¹⁸⁷ Ōemaru was at one time a poet led by Ryōta,¹⁸⁸ a famous poet who was from Shinano, but who had died when Issa was twenty five years old.

Issa left Ōsaka at the beginning of 1798 and went back again to Kyōto, where he arranged for the publishing and despatch to Edo of his second collection of verses from poets he had met on his journey, a volume entitled Sarabakasa.¹⁸⁹ This done, Issa returned to Kashiwabara and from there back to Edo.

The Tabishui contains some 396 verses, only four of

which are by Issa. The Sarabakasa contains some 310 verses, forty of which Issa wrote.¹⁹⁰

For the travelling poet the publishing of collections of verses by other poets was a means of raising finance. Poets paid a small fee for the inclusion of their poems in such collections and so the cost of publishing was paid by those whose verses were included, and there was usually a little money left over. Communications were poor however and it was often difficult to collect the fees as well as to distribute the collections of poetry.¹⁹¹

That Issa published two volumes on one journey is evidence of his ability in such projects and helps to explain why he often covered the same ground on his journeys. It seems he intended to publish a third volume, a memorial collection in memory of Chikua, for a covering note sent with one of the copies of Sarabakasa mentions this intention.¹⁹²

Issa, through a publisher in Kyōto, had volumes of the collection Sarabakasa despatched to Edo, but through an oversight they were never distributed.¹⁹³ Issa returned to Edo unaware of this. The distribution of this volume was important to Issa in his quest for recognition and for the attaining of his goal to be accepted as Chikua's successor. Unaware that no one in or around Edo knew of its existence Issa made his way back to the capital.

5. The Death of His Father.

Issa was now thirty five years old. The six and a half year journey had been a valuable experience for him as a poet. He had been welcomed almost everywhere, treated kindly by most, and his gifts as a poet had been recognised. It was his most hopeful period.

Edo, however, was as hard as ever for him. He sought to succeed Chikua as the master poet of the Nijūrokuan, but it made little difference. He was never truly accepted as such and soon had to make trips out to the Katsushika base of Shimosa and Kasuza in order to make a living and maintain contact with other poets.¹⁹⁴

In November 1799 he visited his old friend Ryūsa, only to find him on his deathbed.¹⁹⁵ The following year another of his old teachers, Genmu, died at the age of seventy four,¹⁹⁶ and in May of 1801, when Issa was thirty eight years old, his father died at the age of sixty eight.¹⁹⁷

Issa had returned home in the early autumn of 1798 and found his father well.¹⁹⁸ After a journey in the Hokuriku region and travels around the outlying districts of Edo he returned home again in March 1801.¹⁹⁹ He was welcomed by his father who rejoiced to see his son return in good health. However, during this visit Issa's father fell victim to typhoid fever, and in spite of Issa's efforts to nurse him back to health, died within weeks. Issa recorded the events of these weeks in his work Chichi no Shūen Nikki.²⁰⁰ As well as describing his father's illness and death it is a vivid description

of the enmity between Issa and his step-mother.

This enmity was intensified through the will left by Issa's father. The will was made just before his father died and during the time that Issa was nursing him. The will stipulated that Issa should have half of all the family possessions, even to the extent of dividing the house in two. All land and equipment was to be equally divided.

From the point of view of Satsu and Senroku the will was completely unreasonable, and local opinion was probably sympathetic to them. They had worked hard during the twenty years that Issa had been away, and had doubled the area, or at least the yield, of the cultivated land. The will stated that Issa was to have half of everything at the time of his father's death. To Satsu and Senroku this was equivalent to having the fruits of twenty years toil given over to one who was, in the opinion of the farmer, little more than a wandering parasite. From the point of view of the farmer, Issa belonged to a class of people known as yūmin, a word made up of the two Chinese characters for 'play' 遊, and person 民. It was a derogatory term used to describe anyone who did not work, but by some means or another managed to maintain at least a minimum standard of living.²⁰²

Issa's father had wanted his eldest son to return home to Kashiwabara, take a wife and raise a family.²⁰³ The will was his way of making this possible for the son he had reluctantly sent off as a young lad to the rigours of life in Edo. Issa could have argued that he had never chosen to leave Kashiwabara, that he was the eldest son,

and that it was his legal right to claim his inheritance. In actual fact, with the will in his possession, his legal position was unassailable.

The confrontation between Issa and his step-mother and step-brother is recorded in all its bitterness in the Chichino Shūen Nikki, where Satsu is depicted as accusing Issa of persuading his dying father to make out the will on his death bed. It is also recorded how she railed upon the dying old man.²⁰⁴ Her attitude of utter disrespect for her husband only resulted in a stronger determination on Issa's part to see the will fulfilled to the letter, and to carry the struggle to the end. This confrontation was to last twelve years, before the will was settled in Issa's favour.²⁰⁵

Just one week after his father's death Issa wrote;

"Seven days have passed since father's death. While he was still with us he urged me to take a wife and live in Kashiwabara. He told the others, too, that I should do this, but they pretend they never heard him say such things. 'Whoever heard of any such will?' they say among themselves, being full of every conceivable greed! Having no desire for further heated argument with them I will revert to my previous life of wandering among the rocks and trees, despising the wind and hiding from the rain. Having now only myself to care about, there will be no shame in such a life for me. However, to simply hold my peace would be against my father's wishes. If you strike even a poor flint, sparks will fly, and even a cracked bell will give out some sound when struck, for this is the very nature of things. Therefore I will not rush recklessly away from home in silence without hearing their response, for this, too, would be against my dead father's wishes. After we had talked about the division of the house and lands, and they had said that they would abide by the will, I left the matter in the hands of the Kobayashi family elders and said no more.

Chichi arite akebono mitashi ao no hara.

Oh that father, too, were here,
As dawn breaks clear before me
Upon green fields."²⁰⁶

Issa finished the records of the events surrounding his father's death with the above prose and poem, and having obtained, it seemed, some verbal assurance that the will would be implemented, returned to Edo in the early summer of 1801.²⁰⁷ He was by this time thirty eight years old, and about to embark upon the most difficult and disappointing years of his life as a poet.

6. Life in and Around Edo. 1801-1813.

The next twelve years of Issa's life were to be characterized by poverty, loneliness and a growing awareness that his ambition was not going to be achieved in Edo. The longer he lived in and around the great city the more he became conscious that he would never truly succeed there, and the more cynical he became towards the city, its citizens, and life in general.

Edo, at this time, was a thriving, bustling city in which the old social divisions, rooted in Confucianism and propagated by the shogunate, were crumbling, and the rich merchants had come into their own as the patrons of the 'peoples' arts. These were days when theatres and play-houses thrived and strolling players, tumblers and all kinds of travelling troupes competed for the purses of the rich.²⁰⁸

With the breakdown of social barriers and the rise of the merchant class, various clubs and associations thrived. Some groups met to discuss the art of cultivating flowers, others to appreciate works of art, and yet others to read and discuss the novels of the day, both serious and comic. Many met for the enjoyment and composition of poetry of various styles. Many of these meetings took place in the drawing rooms of the rich merchants and met on a regular monthly basis.²⁰⁹

Edo was a city where money ruled, a city where the disparity between rich and poor tended to increase rather than decrease. There was fierce competition for the coins of others, money was the measure of almost

everything. Some of Issa's verses in this period depicted the mood with cynicism as for example;

Asagao mo zenī dake hiraku ukiyo kana.²¹⁰

This floating world

In which even the morning glory

Opens only

According to the amount paid for it!

Asagao o hana made shite uru hito ya.²¹¹

Even the morning glory

Is acclaimed a fine flower,

And lo! Someone selling them!

Aogusa mo zenī dake soyogu kado suzumi.²¹²

A little coolness at the gate,

And yet

Even the fresh green plants

Seem to rustle only

According to the amount paid for them!

It was, in all probability, Issa's acute awareness of his own poverty and dependence upon others, that made him so conscious that the competition for money was so fierce. He revealed his thoughts concerning his own life-style in the following verse;

Aki no kaze kojiki wa ware o mikurabururu.²¹³

In the autumn wind

The beggar looks at me

And compares himself!

Because he belonged to the class of poet known as gyōhai, Issa had to constantly travel in order to live. He was not recognised as a master poet and consequently

aspiring poets rarely visited him. By travelling and offering companionship as a poet, and by doing odd jobs in the houses of patrons, he received food and lodging, and sometimes even a little pocket money. He tried to time his visits to coincide with haiku gatherings where he might win a small prize for a good verse or receive a fee for judging the verses of others, thus making use of his position as a 'marker' in the Katsushika school. It may be supposed that he gave instruction to beginners in the haiku art in order to attain precious income. When such opportunity was not available he turned his hand to odd jobs. He was a deft hand at changing the paper covering on doors and screens and at times did gardening or prepared the evening bath. He also, at times, acted as caretaker at the homes of patrons if they were away.²¹⁴

Another reason why poets such as Issa were often made welcome was that with their constant travelling they were sources of up to date news. Issa was in touch with life in Edo and its environs and was constantly meeting a variety of people of different classes. He was a fount of news of many kinds, news of poets and personalities, scandals and gossip, politics and social events.²¹⁵

The fact that such news items were of practical value to Issa on his travels may well account for the avid curiosity and strong interest he showed in the lurid and sensational. Some of the memo type entries in his work at this time could have been notes on news topics, the recounting of which would make his presence more

acceptable in the homes and company of others. His diaries of these years contained frequent mention of fires, robberies, murders and assaults.²¹⁶

He also had a considerable interest in medicines and cures to the extent that it has been theorized that he at one time worked for a doctor. It is more likely that such knowledge was both useful to him personally and also increased his usefulness in the homes of others as he travelled around.²¹⁷

After his return to Edo in 1801 Issa spent increasingly more time in the homes of others, or travelling in the Shimosa and Kazusa districts. His records show, for example, that in the year 1803 he was on the road from the middle of April until the beginning of September.²¹⁸ He was journeying for almost eight months of the year, often visiting the same places over and over again. He travelled constantly but was never far from Edo. It can be calculated that in the ten years after his father's death he spent fully half his days travelling in or around the two areas mentioned above or on the road to and from Kashiwabara.

A great deal of this time was spent in the homes of patrons. In 1808, for example, he spent 127 days with Matsui, a rich merchant, 49 days at the home of Seibi and 5 days at the poet-priest Ippyō's dwelling.²¹⁹ During this year he also spent 176 days travelling to and from Kashiwabara, or staying there. In total this amounted to 357 days in others' homes that year. Although this particular year is an extreme example it illustrates

his general way of life during these years. He was constantly moving house and because he was away for such long periods at a time, people were reluctant to rent to him.²²⁰

On his journeys he knew many days of hunger, provoking the following kind of verse;

Dono hito mo hidara kao nari kumo no mine.²²¹

Clouds tower high in the sky,

And everyone I see

Looks hungry.

When Issa returned from his journey into western Japan he was hopeful of fulfilling his quest for recognition. Two years after his return from that journey he was still remembered in the Ōsaka region since a historical reference of 1800 indicates Issa's position, in the opinion of poets in the Ōsaka region, in the haiku world at that time.²²³ His name appeared in the 'Haijin Bansuke', a graded list of poets arranged in the manner of the graded lists of the sumō wrestler. This list was published in Ōsaka and only seventeen Edo poets were listed. Among them Issa was ranked as 'Edo maegashira' which translated²²⁴ very loosely means first grade but not really outstanding. He was very low on the list of thirteen maegashira, but the fact that only seventeen Edo poets were included and only Issa from the Katsushika school, indicates that he was still recognised as a poet of some promise in Ōsaka. Yet in 1803 we find that he was living in the equivalent of a toolshed or small storehouse of a Shinto shrine in the delta region of the Sumida and Naka rivers,

an area where, the houses of the poor clustered on the outskirts of the city on low-lying and easily flooded land.²²⁵

Issa was probably some kind of caretaker for the shrine grounds and did odd jobs in exchange for the use of the shed as a dwelling.

His loneliness at this time is captured in verses such as the following;

Ume sakedo uguisu nakedo hitori kana.²²⁶

The plum tree blossoms,

The nightingale sings ,

But I am all alone.

Yorikakaru tabi ni hiyatsuku hashira kana.²²⁷

The wooden pillar,²²⁸

Each time I rest against it

How cold it feels.

Having not yet given up his quest for recognition in Edo he was still an ardent student of Japanese poetry of the past and for a short time in 1803 also made an intensive study of some classical Chinese poetry.²²⁹

Although he had received no formal literary training, he read and studied avidly the great anthologies of the past in order to increase his chances of succeeding in his quest, and also to enrich his own poetry. References to the classics of Japan's past are frequently found in his work of this period.²³⁰

In 1804, when Issa was forty one years old, he moved from the toolshed of the shrine to a small rented house.²³¹ It was a detached house with a small garden, and though

still in the poor part of the city, being situated a little further west along the banks of the Sumida river, it was by far the best accomodation he had obtained in Edo. In January of 1805 he wrote;

232

Ganjitsu mo kokora wa edo no inaka kana.

New Year's Day,

And here I am

Still in the Edo suburbs.

From the time he rented this small house he began to receive visits friends and fellow poets and enjoyed a relatively successful period.²³³ It was during this period that he became acquainted with Michihiko, a physician who had given up his profession to follow the way of haiku, Otsuni,²³⁴ a well known poet-priest, and Sōchō²³⁵ a member of the samurai class turned poet. Issa also developed a much stronger link with the merchant Natsume Seibi at this time.²³⁶ Issa had met Seibi, a leading Edo haiku poet, before his return from his journey into western Japan. A verse by Seibi is included in the volume Sarabakasa.²³⁷

Michihiko, Sōchō and Seibi were later to be known, in their own time, as three of the four most celebrated haiku poets in Edo, the fourth being a poet by the name of Kanrai.²³⁸ Acquaintance with such poets at the very heart of the Edo haiku scene must have given Issa some encouragement to press towards his goal.

Around this time Issa met at Seibi's home, the poet - priest Ippyō.²³⁹ This Nichiren Buddhist priest was to become both a patron and a friend to Issa. During this

time both Seibi and Ippyō were important patrons of Issa. Ippyō's style was very similar in some respects to that of Issa and his influence upon Issa is considered to have been quite strong.²⁴⁰

These were years of great industry on Issa's part, and by this time he was undoubtedly thinking constantly in terms of haiku verse to the extent that he could produce a verse in the distinctive 5-7-5 syllable about almost anything he saw. He slept with his note-pad, ink and writing brush near his pillow and day by day too they were never far from his side. He carried them everywhere and was constantly recording his feelings of loneliness, despair, anger, amusement, scorn, and empathy with the small and weak through the medium of his verses.²⁴¹

Around 20,000 of his verses have been handed down to us but it is certain that he wrote many more. His habit of hardly letting a day go by without picking up his pen and recording his feelings has contributed to his unique style in that a great many of his verses are an expression of his feelings and cannot be truly appreciated without reference to the circumstances that helped to produce them. Because his poetry is so closely related to the man himself, it finds an echo in the hearts of those who read it since as fellow humans, we feel the same things he felt. In contrast, the great master Bashō left some 2000 verses,²⁴² almost all of which can stand alone, often as masterpieces in their own right, and without reference to the feelings and circumstances of the poet when he wrote them.

Although Issa wrote a great many verses and also spent considerable time studying, he also took part freely in city pleasures. Being single and responsible to no one, he had time and opportunity for visits to playhouses, festivals, fairs, and blossom viewing excursions etc.²⁴³ His records also reveal him as being observant of city life with many references to foreigners, deaths on the highway, executions, suicides, robberies, murders and assaults.²⁴⁴

While living in the poor quarters on the outskirts of Edo, Issa made his seemingly one real friend who was not connected in any way with the haiku world. This man went by the name of Taki Kōshun, although his given name was Yanagisawa Yūzo.²⁴⁵ He was a masterless samurai to whom poverty was no stranger. He lived in rented accommodation close to Issa and scraped a living teaching calligraphy to children.²⁴⁶ They were true friends and their relationship was markedly different from the associations established between Issa and most poets and patrons, whose company was important to Issa in his quest for success as a haiku poet.

Issa had no feeling of friendship towards Michihiko for example,²⁴⁷ and his relationship with Seibi, although continuing even after Issa's return to live in Kashiwabarā, was never a truehearted friendship.²⁴⁸ Seibi's social position and riches would hardly allow such. Taki Kōshun died in 1807 when Issa was forty four years old. Issa grieved much over his death and wrote the verse he was later to use when he heard of the death of Kurita

Chodō of Shikoku;

249

Kono sugi wa waga mi no ue ka naku karasu.

Will it be over me

That next

The crow will caw.

In his diary Issa related how they met and of their
friendship.²⁵⁰ He wrote in a way he wrote of no one else
except his old friend and patron Ryūsa.

It was from around this time, when Issa was forty four
years old, that his awareness that his hopes for the
future would never be realised seemed to gradually
increase. The longer he lived in and around Edo the more
difficult life seemed to become for him. His longing
for his home town was strong and ever increasing.²⁵¹ The
inheritance problem was still unsolved and so on July
of 1807, less than three months after Taki Kōshun's death,
he returned home to Kashiwabara.

The purpose of this visit was twofold. He wanted to
discuss the will, and he also needed to make preparations
for the seventh anniversary services to commemorate his
father's death. The seventh anniversary, was and still
is, an important one for Buddhists, and being the eldest
son Issa was obliged to be present.²⁵³ He was disappoint-
ed in his lack of success in a settlement concerning the
inheritance problem and expressed his feelings in the
following verses;

Tama ni kite furusato no tsuki wa kumori keru.²⁵⁴

Infrequent though my visits have been,

When I came

The moon over my village

Was clouded.

Yuki no hi ya furusatobito mo buashirai.²⁵⁵

A snowy day

And I am chilled, too,

By those in my old home town.

It is interesting to note that local records in Shinano reveal that from the year after his father's death Issa regularly paid one quarter of one ryō in gold as tax each year and is listed as a member of the Kashiwabara village community.²⁵⁶ One ryō of gold weighed 44 momme.

It is difficult to assess its purchasing power because values fluctuated greatly at this time. Considering that Issa later demanded that his step-mother and step-brother pay him just over 30 ryō in gold as rent for half the house since his father's death, i.e. thirteen years,²⁵⁷ one quarter of a ryō tax does not seem to be a very large sum.

Issa may have paid this tax to preserve his position locally in the clash with Satsu and Senroku over the will, or he may have had it paid for him. Whatever the case, he showed no signs of possessing any wealth while in Edo. He was back in Edo again by October 1807.²⁵⁸

In 1808 he returned home again, this time for the thirty third anniversary of his grandmother's death.²⁵⁹

At this time, through the mediation of the village elders and the resident priest²⁶⁰ of the Myōsen temple at which the Kobayashi family were registered,²⁶¹ the inheritance problem was finally solved. During the negotiations Issa even threatened to take the case to

the courts in Edo, for Kashiwabara was on land directly controlled by the shogunate,²⁶² a course of action that would have been bad for the village as a whole and might well have resulted in both parties suffering considerable loss.

Issa received the rights to half the land, half the house, and as the eldest son, the Buddhist home altar which enshrined the spirits of his ancestors. He settled for eleven ryō of gold instead of his original demand of thirty as rent for half the house since his father's death. Although the will had been settled there was no improvement in the relationship between the two parties, on the contrary the hostility appears to have intensified.²⁶³

Issa was no longer a poor man. He had a home of his own and the promise of finance. However, in the December of this same year he returned to Edo, only to find that his small rented house had been let to another in his absence.²⁶⁴

He went to his patron Seibi's home and there spent the New Year holidays.²⁶⁵ Cast upon the charity of his patron and hearing of the great conflagration that swept through the Nihonbashi area of central Edo, destroying hundreds of homes, he wrote;

²⁶⁶

Ganjitsu ya ware nomi naranu su nashi tori.

New Year's Day.

Not just I

But many others, too,

Are birds without nests.

In May 1809 Issa once again returned to Kashiwabara. He visited haiku poets in the surrounding towns and villages.²⁶⁷ He returned to Edo again by December,²⁶⁸ when the snow lay thick in Kashiwabara, but it is not known where he lived at this time.

During the first few months of 1810 he began his celebrated work Nanaban Nikki.²⁶⁹ It is his most complete diary work and of great interest since it was written during this time of transition between Edo and Kashiwabara, a time when Issa's unique poetic style came to maturity.

He paid yet another visit to Kashiwabara in May 1810,²⁷⁰ a visit apparently motivated by Senroku's reluctance to keep to his part of the agreement over the will. After visiting the village elders Issa walked home in the rain to be welcomed by complete silence, with not one person addressing him. His feelings at this time are expressed in the verse;

Furusato ya yoru mo sawaru mo bara no hana.²⁷¹

My old home town,

To touch it,

Even to draw near to it,

A thorny briar.

After a short stay somewhere outside the village he returned once more to Edo, only to become involved in a distasteful affair at Seibi's home. While he was staying there some money was apparently stolen and Issa, along with the servants of the house, was forbidden to

leave the premises for a whole week.²⁷² He was treated as a non-entity, and the whole episode hurt him deeply. It opened his eyes to the way his rich patron saw him as a person, one to be suspected rather than trusted as a friend. A similar experience happening to Michihiko or Ippyō or any other such poet who frequented Seibi's home is difficult to imagine.

At forty nine years of age Issa was still living a pauper's existence. He continued to be based in Edo, spending half his time on his travels from patron to patron, in the rural areas just outside the city, particularly in the Shimosa area.

He was, as ever, continually writing and began Waga²⁷³
Haru Shu and Kabukan in 1812.²⁷⁴

In June 1812 he paid yet another visit to Kashiwabara, staying at the honjin very close to his own home.²⁷⁵ His motive for this visit is unclear but it is reasonably safe to assume that by this time he had in his heart given up his quest in Edo and had inwardly made the decision to return home permanently. Again he visited poets in the towns and villages around Kashiwabara,²⁷⁶ in all probability preparing a base for his life as a poet and teacher of haiku, using his home in Kashiwabara as his centre.

In July 1812 a collection of poems commemorating the thirteenth anniversary of his old teacher Genmu's death, was compiled and published by a poet named Isen, who was, though this undertaking, seeking to revive the old Konnichian with himself as its master poet.²⁷⁷ Isen asked

Issa to write a preface to this collection, which was entitled Nanibukuro. In his preface Issa traced the history of the Konnichian from the founder of the Katsushika school down to Genmu, whose death marked its end.

This undertaking, however, had been without consultation with, or permission from, the leader of the Katsushika main school, a man named Sekine Hakkin, a poet who had studied with Issa under Somaru.²⁷⁸ An inn-keeper by trade, he had risen to become the fifth poet to succeed in becoming the leader of Issa's old school.²⁷⁹

Isen and Issa had acted in such a way that their efforts were considered a severe breach of protocol. The Katsushika school was very particular about such procedures and considered its position usurped. Isen was rebuked but allowed to continue as the leader of the Konnichian in the absence of a more suitable poet, but for Issa this affair resulted in his expulsion from the Katsushika school.²⁸⁰

Though there is no direct proof it is very likely that Issa's dismissal was the result of a continuing dissatisfaction reaching as far back as Issa's election to the leadership of the Nijūrokuan. That Issa was never recognised as a master poet by the mainstream of the Katsushika school is evidenced by the fact that in all their records he is never described as anything more than a shippitsu or hanja.²⁸¹ His dismissal also smacked of discrimination against one who had never really been able to rid himself of the stigma of being mukudori.²⁸²

The fact that Issa was never again to be on friendly terms with the Katsushika school is evidenced by his participation in another work. In 1817, when Issa was fifty four years of age, a volume called Bashō Habune was published by a poet named Takawa Ōryū.²⁸³ Issa also contributed to, and lent his name to this work which derided the narrowmindedness of the Katsushika school for proclaiming that only Michihiko and Seibi were the true representatives of the Bashō style in Edo.²⁸⁴ The tone of Issa's writing gives a strong impression that he continued to nurse feelings of bitterness towards the Katsushika school long after his dismissal from it.

On January 19th. 1813 Issa was in Kashiwabara for the Buddhist services on the thirteenth anniversary of his father's death. During this time a final reconciliation was made with Senroku²⁸⁵ and the way was now clear for Issa to return and live in Kashiwabara, and for the first time he settled in his own house. He was by now fifty years old.

He was now a landowner, a middle-class farmer, but for thirty six years he had never ploughed a furrow nor sowed the seed, nor was he ever to do so. He described his years in Edo as;

"15690 days that have made me a white haired old man."²⁸⁶

The final cause for his decision to live in Kashiwabara is not clear but the underlying basic reason was his growing awareness of the hopelessness of his quest and

the meaninglessness of his life in Edo. His major disappointment was his relationship with others.²⁸⁷ His real and close friends had all died, his relationship with the Katsushika school had deteriorated beyond repair, the incident at Seibi's had saddened him, and the basic attitude of Edo poets in particular, and the Edo populace in general, had not changed towards him in thirty six years.²⁸⁸ After a promising start and years of effort he was still the 'starling' begging crumbs, a second class citizen without even the minimum of social standing necessary for acceptance.

During this period, especially in the latter half, Issa's travels had lacked purpose, and without any progress towards his goal, life in Edo became meaningless and increasingly unbearable. At forty nine years of age, just before he was about to leave Edo he wrote;

²⁸⁹
Iza inan Edo wa. suzumi mo mutsukashiki.

When all is said and done

Even to cool oneself in Edo

Is difficult..

After the reconciliation with Senroku Issa travelled from Kashiwabara to Zenkōji (modern Nagano city) where a bad attack of carbuncles immobilized him for seventy days.²⁹⁰ It was in November of this year, 1813, that he finally took up permanent residence in Kashiwabara. He was by now fifty one years old.

In a home of his own at last, with no need to worry where the next meal was coming from and surrounded by those who at least would not look down on him as a

peasant from the countryside, it would be easy to assume that Issa was now to lead a less troubled existence.

However, apart from one short period, during which his life was comparatively happy, misfortune and grief were to be his almost constant companions.

7. Life as a Poet in Shinano.

However difficult it was for him in Edo, it was not easy, or even possible, for Issa to forget his life there. In the draft of poems sent from Kashiwabara to Seibi for his appraisal he stated that he was constantly concerned that now he was living so far away from Edo he would lose touch with the lively trends of the haiku scene in the great city.²⁹¹ Even though he had actually begun to live in Kashiwabara, he visited Edo again in August 1814.²⁹²

Whether the purpose of this visit was to formally announce his retirement from the world of Edo haiku or to arrange for the publishing of a collection of poems he had made to commemorate this fact, or both, is not clear. During this visit he published his commemorative volume Sankanjin. It contained 309 verses, 8 of which were by Issa.²⁹³ The preface was written by Seibi and the collection included poems from poets in 19 provinces.

Issa later wrote of this particular visit to Edo;

"There was a man who vowed he would never cross the Kamo river again, but here I am leaving my peaceful and secure mountain home, my white hair blowing in the wind, bound once more to mix with those of Edo, land of fame and wealth;

Hazukashi ya makari dete toru Edo no toshi.

Ashamed I am to be

Setting out once more

For Edo,

There to grow one year older still!"²⁹⁴

Issa was to pay three visits to Edo after settling in Kashiwabara. The one mentioned above lasted from the end of July until December. The following year, 1815,

he also spent from September until December travelling in and around the Shimosa area.²⁹⁵ Finally in October 1816 he was back in Edo and its surrounds again and stayed until June of 1817.²⁹⁶ During this final visit Natsume Seibi died. His death received the briefest of mention in Issa's diary at that time;

"Hip pain much less, entered Fugawa, Seibi dead."²⁹⁷

It is thought that Issa's feelings towards Seibi had grown cold, especially after he, among others, had been under suspicion at the time of the robbery. Though Issa respected Seibi and valued his advice as a poet, he did not show any particular grief at his death. Issa later wrote in commemoration of Seibi;

Sensei nakunarete wa tada no sakura kana.²⁹⁸

With teacher passed on,

The cherry blossoms

Are now but cherry blossoms.

Issa travelled home from Edo for the last time and arrived in Kashiwabara on the fourth of July 1817.²⁹⁹

From this time on he was never again to travel any great distance from his home town, although in his writings he indicated that it was constantly on his heart to visit Edo once more.³⁰⁰ Ill health and failing strength made any further visits impossible. He was now fifty four years of age.

The work of the farm was done by others who were hired to work the land.³⁰¹ The everyday running of farm affairs was looked after by his wife. The income from the land, plus the income he received for his poetic activities, made it unnecessary for Issa to work.³⁰² He never chose

to repair his own house and there is no record of his ever working his own land.³⁰³ Issa had entered upon a period of economic independence unknown to him in his Edo days. He was now a member of the rural intelligentsia who never needed to work, and although his poetry contained much that described the hard lot of the farmer, he himself never again shared in the farmer's toil from the time he left Kashiwabara as a young lad.

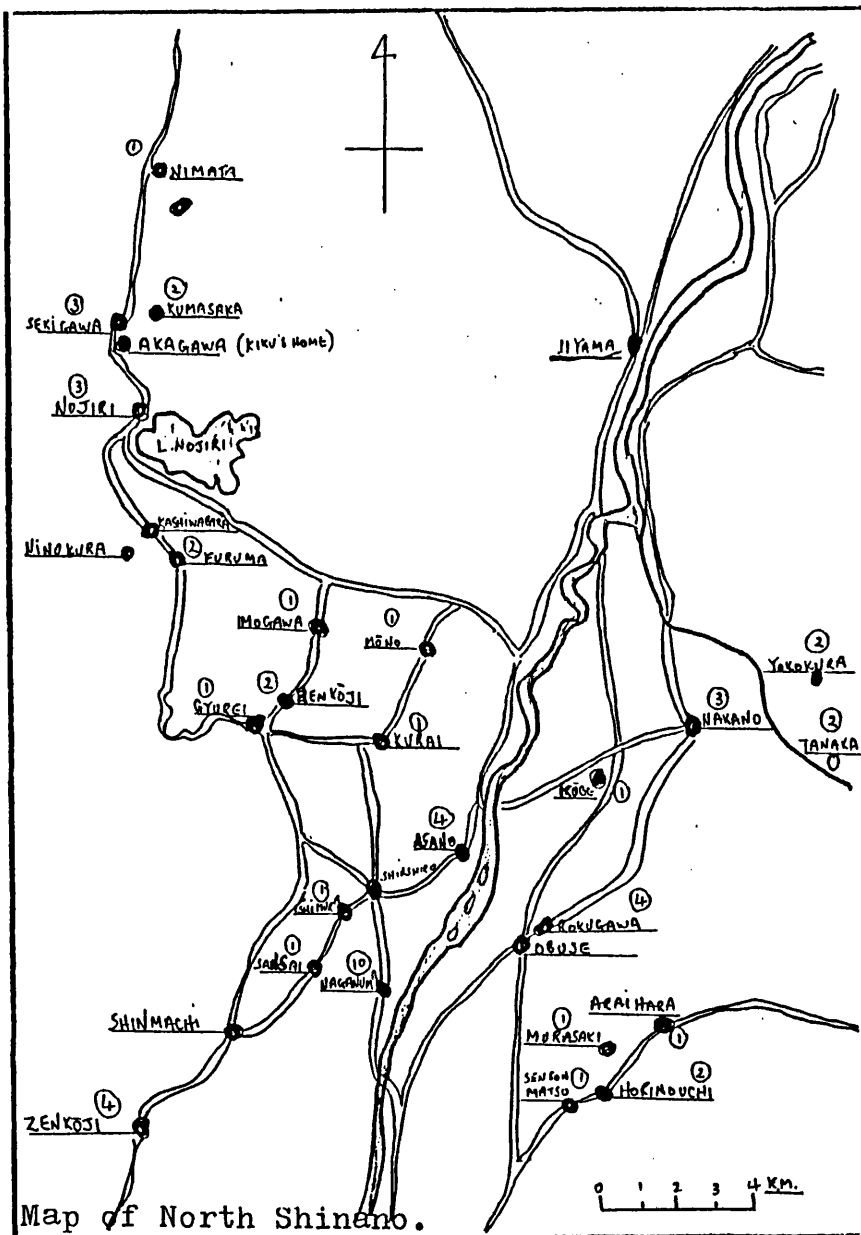
Issa's constant occupation was haiku verse, and this remained so until his death. As his haiku activities increased so did the number of those who owned him as their teacher and instructor in the haiku art. He became highly regarded among the poets of Shinano and became a leader among them. The recognition that had eluded him for so long in Edo was quickly granted him in Shinano. Before he died, over fifty poets in the Shinano region owned him as their teacher, or recognised him as a master poet. Among them were high officials,³⁰⁴ local gentry, rich merchants and inn-keepers.

After Issa ceased visiting Edo he spent fully half his time calling on the above mentioned poets. Major towns along the routes he travelled in Shinano were Naganuma, Zenkōji, Takai, Rokugawa, Asano, Nakano and Nojiri. The greatest concentration of poets was in Naganuma (ten poets), Zenkōji, Asano and Rokugawa (each with four poets), with whom Issa had some degree of relationship as teacher.

See map overleaf for details.

Map of north Shinano showing the distribution of poets who received visits from Issa and who recognised him as a master poet or owned him as a teacher in the haiku art.

- The ringed numbers indicate the number of such poets in each town.



In contrast to the poems born of his years of poverty in Edo, he wrote at this time;

Raku raku to kute neru yoru ya aki no tsutu.³⁰⁶

These nights

When with such ease

I eat and sleep.

Autumn dew.

Issa had always been weighed down by a guilty conscience about his non-productive life. As a son of the soil, the hard life and struggle of the farmer was deeply ingrained in him. Even before he returned to Kashiwabara this sense of guilt was evident in his work. For example;

Tagayasanu tsumi mo ikubaku toshi no kure.³⁰⁷

How great is it now?

The sin

Of never having tilled the land.

Back now in Kashiwabara and surrounded daily by men and women working in the fields in the snowless months, and living in a community where everyday conversation was filled with references to the farmer's work, such feelings could only have increased in intensity. When he was sixty two years old he wrote;

Hana no kage³⁰⁸ nemaji mirai ga osoroshiki.³⁰⁹

In the shade of the blossoms

I cannot sleep,

For the future

Is too fearful.

The phrase 'in the shade of the blossoms', as well as

having a literal meaning, also meant 'to live a life of ease'. It is because he has never toiled in the fields that he fears some punishment in the future.

Issa carried this sense of guilt to the last, yet when any threat to his wealth was made, as in the case of a tax assessment, he reacted sharply.³¹⁰ He pleaded the hardships of the haiku poet's lot upon the open road, and bolstered his case by citing others who were not paying tax. Thus, while decrying the lot of the farmer in his poetry and bearing a guilty conscience in respect to his own lack of productivity, he was not prepared to pay extra tax himself.

The story is passed down that at times Issa used a sedan chair and was actually carried in it to the homes of fellowpoets and disciples.³¹¹ This would have been unthinkable to the ordinary farmer. Whether the story is true or not, there can be no doubt that the non-productive Issa was not popular in his own home town. While no longer despised because of his low social standing, he was still considered to be a parasitic waster. The scorn displayed by those in Kashiwabara is reflected in his work;

Himajin ya ka ga deta deta to fure aruku.³¹²

The idler

Strolls about announcing,

"The mosquitoes are out,

The mosquitoes are out!

Shinibeta to soshiraba soshire yu kotatsu.³¹³

Curse me then,

Go on, curse me if you will

For not dying soon enough!

Evening at the hearthside.

In the village of Kashiwabara Issa was still a lonely man and when he travelled he was almost always by himself. Although relations with his brother Senroku gradually improved, Senroku was a working farmer like most other men in the village, and there was probably not a great deal of contact between them.³¹⁴ For one like Issa, considered a parasite, even to walk down the street in Kashiwabara could have been an embarrassing experience.³¹⁵ Passing by the men working in the fields as he set out on his travels would have been even more embarrassing for him. His only solace would have come from the times he spent with fellow poets in their homes and in his own home with his wife and children. The fortunes of the latter, however, were to be a source of much grief to Issa.

Issa's settled life in Kashiwabara influenced his work in that it became less pointed, less urgent, no longer developing to deeper maturity. It seems that Issa in his final years, as a poet was simply marking time. It was mainly the constant occurrence of personal tragedy and misfortune that beset his family with alarming regularity, which compelled his work to acquire even greater depth and meaning in areas normally avoided by the conventional poet. His personal tragedies were the means by which his poetic work was kept from stagnation, and during this period some of his most poignant and

deeply moving poems were composed.

8. Family Life in Kashiwabara.

Issa married for the first time on April 11th. 1814, less than one month before his fifty first birthday. His wife, Kiku, was a young woman of twenty seven from a prosperous farming family in the village of Akagawa, about seven kilometres north of Kashiwabara.³¹⁶ Shortly after their wedding Issa wrote;

"After fifty years without a day of ease I have married a wife in the spring of this year. Forgetting that now I am an old man, and as any man would be in his desire, I am like an old butterfly alighting on a fresh flower!

Gojū muko atama o kakusu sensu kana.

Hiding his balding head

With his fan,

A new bridegroom,

Fifty years old!"³¹⁷

Kiku was a hard worker and looked after the home and the land during the frequent times that Issa was away. He would be away for weeks, even months on end, consorting with and instructing others in the haiku art.³¹⁸

Issa and his young wife's good relationship with one another is evidenced by frequent mention of her comings and goings in his diaries. A letter he wrote to her indicates both his respect and concern.³¹⁹

Four children were born to them, three boys and one girl, but not one of them lived very long. The three boys all died before seeing their first birthdays, and the little girl lived a little over one year. Kiku herself died when she was thirty six.³²⁰

Issa's first child, a son named Sentaro was born in

mid April 1816, but had died by the end of May.³²¹ Issa wrote a verse at the child's birth revealing his hopes that the boy would grow healthy, and his own anticipation of his son's childhood years.

Hatsu awase nikumare sakari ni hayaku nare.³²²

First kimono.

Ah, may the time

When he will be at the height of naughtiness,

Come quickly!

The second child, a girl named Sato, was born in April 1818, shortly before Issa's fifty sixth birthday. Issa longed for, even dreamed of,³²³ her safe delivery and when she was born healthy and began to grow he was overjoyed. She became the apple of his eye. Seven months after her birth Issa wrote on New Year's Day 1819;

Hae warae futatsu ni naru zo kesa kara wa.³²⁴

Laugh and crawl around,

Into your second year

From this morning.

Thus he celebrated her entry into her first New Year with this well known and much loved poem. It appears also in his most famous work Ora ga Haru,³²⁵ a work which clearly portrays his fondness for children. At fifty six years of age, and with white hair adorning his short stocky figure, he must have seemed like the child's grandfather to those who did not know him.

Sato succumbed to smallpox just after her first birth-³²⁶ day. Her death was a tremendous blow to Issa and brought forth from him one of his most famous and most moving

poems;

327

Tsuyu no yo ya tsuyu no yo nagara sari nagara.

This world is dew,

A world of dew,

And yet, and yet....

This poem was a response to the Buddhist teaching that this world is an illusion and because of its transience men should not attach themselves too closely to it in terms of love and endearment, but rather resign themselves to the inevitable partings of this life in a sense of detachment, thus saving themselves from grief and unhappiness. Issa, however, in his great sorrow, and with the memory of his little girl, the joy of his heart, constantly with him, seemed to question this concept from the very depths of his being. He was unable to resign himself completely to the fact of her death.

Thirty five days later he wrote;

328

Aki kaze ya mushiritagarishi akai hana.

The autumn wind

How it strives to tear off

The little red flower.

The following year another boy was born. They named him Ishitaro. Ishi means 'stone' or 'rock' and obviously the name was chosen in the hope that this son might grow into a strong healthy boy. Issa's joy at the conception of another child was expressed in the following verse praising his wife for her ability to bear children;

329

Suzu kaze ya nani kuwasete mo futari mae.

Cool refreshing breeze.

Whatever this wife of mine

Is given to eat,

It is for two!

Though overjoyed to be a father again, Issa himself fell ill soon after Ishitaro's birth. He came down with palsy on the snowy road to Asano and had to be carried home to Kashiwabara in a sedan chair.³³⁰ Although rendered unable to speak, and for some of the time half paralyzed, he recovered. His joy at being restored to health was shortlived. Ishitaro died upon his mother's back just three months after he was born.³³¹

The cause of his death was lack of air, some blockage in the breathing passage.³³² Babies slept strapped upon their mother's backs very soon after birth, freeing the mother from constant nursing and enabling her to work with both hands free. The baby was strapped on the mother's back facing the same way as the mother. The warmth of the mother's body helped the baby to sleep, but in this position the baby's head could not be seen by the mother and often lolled about at an alarming angle. A very young baby, unable to support the weight of its own head, was in considerable danger if the mother became completely engrossed in her work. Death from blockage of air was always a danger when the babe was very young.

Issa's grief was expressed in another moving poem;

Mō ichido semete me o ake zōni zen.³³³

Just once more

Open your eyes

Just one more time.

³³⁴
Rice cake broth on a tray.

In his grief he also wrote;

Kagerō ya me ni tsukimadou waraigao.³³⁵

Spring mists.

Fleetingly

It floats before my misty eyes,³³⁶

His smiling face.

From this time on Kiku never really regained her health.

The following year, 1822, another boy was born on the 10th. of March.³³⁷ Issa's joy was again shortlived for Kiku never recovered her strength and died on May the 12th. 1823, at the age of thirty six. Issa mourned her passing with the following poem;

Kogoto iu aite mo araba kyō no tsuki.³³⁸

If only she were here

To gently scold and nag,

As I look up to gaze upon

The moon this night.

During Kiku's fight to recover, the baby boy was put in the care of another woman who reportedly was well able to breast feed him, but when Issa saw his little son, Konsaburo, at his wife's funeral, the baby was just a bundle of skin and bone. The woman had fed the baby on water alone. Issa was furious and quickly put the child in the care of another. His condition improved for a while but he died before the end of the year.³³⁹

Issa was now completely alone again, an old man of sixty. His ten years of married life thus far, though no doubt containing times of marital happiness and

paternal joy, were marked more by the constant stream of misfortune and grief.

The cause of Kiku's death is not clear but it seems that the hard work of the household and farm and the constant bearing of children were the main factors responsible for her ill health. Issa's diaries reveal him to have been virtually tireless in his marital relations with his young wife. Entries recording his sexual activity with her as three, four, or even five times in one night are not difficult to find.³⁴⁰ It could be speculated that this was from a desire to have children in his old age, or the isolation they experienced during the long winter months when he and his wife were snowed up in the house alone.

Rumour had it in the village that a profligate life in Edo had resulted in Issa's diseased body which in turn was the cause of sickly children and a wife dead in her prime.³⁴¹

All alone again Issa wrote;

"Left alone, my wife gone on before me, my children, too, departed, leaving me at the end of this another year, with no respite for my grief, amidst this difficult and sorrowful life.

Midabutsu no miyage ni toshi no hirou kana.

A gift from the Buddha,

Can I ever see it so?

Yet another year."³⁴²

The following year, 1824, Issa married for the second time. He was now sixty one years of age. His bride was a thirty seven years old woman named Yuki from a samurai

family of the town of Iiyama, some fifteen kilometres northwest of Kashiwabara. This marriage lasted three months.³⁴³ It is difficult to imagine how a thirty seven year old woman from a samurai family could have possibly lived in any kind of harmony with an old man of sixty one who was suffering from palsy and so dedicated to his art that even during the busiest time of the farmer's year he would drag his weakened body over the country roads.

One reason suggested for the disintegration of this marriage is that Yuki thought she was marrying a sick old man simply to nurse him, but was surprised by the sexual drive still unabated in her seemingly sick and aged husband.³⁴⁴ Yuki left Issa in August of 1824, and immediately after this he suffered another attack of palsy.³⁴⁵ He was again rendered unable to speak and convalesced in the home of one of his fellow poets, Nakajima of Yomase, for three months. He returned to his empty house in December.³⁴⁶

Issa by this time was becoming increasingly infirm, yet in August of 1826, aged sixty three, he married for the third time. His third wife was a young woman of thirty one named Yao. Her home was in the province of Echigo but she worked as a wet nurse to a tradesman's family in Kashiwabara. She already had one son by the third son of the Nakamura family who lived next to Issa.³⁴⁷ Her son was one year old.

On the first day of June 1827 a fire broke out in

Kashiwabara which destroyed many houses, including Issa's.³⁴⁸ The storehouse, a thick earthen walled building designed to withstand fire, was all that remained, and this became home for Issa and Yao. Looking at the ashes of what had been his home, Issa wrote;

349

Yake tsuchi no hokari pokari ya nomi sawagi.

On the scorched earth

The fleas hop,

And hop again,

In their excitement.

After the fire Issa left Kashiwabara to visit poets and disciples in the regions around his home town, and stayed way until the 8th. of November. He returned to the storehouse only to die there after an attack of palsy on the 19th. of the same month. He was in his sixty fifth year.³⁵⁰

When he died his wife was carrying his child, and in April 1828 his daughter Yata was born.³⁵¹ It is through this child that Issa's lineage is continued. It seems a somewhat symbolic end to his life that the healthy child he so longed for was conceived just before his death and became the only child of his to live much longer than one year, yet he was never to see her face. It was the final irony.

9. Conclusion.

In terms of all but his poetry as it has been evaluated since his death, Issa's life was one of constant striving but never quite achieving. Whether it was for recognition as a poet in Edo, real friendships, a family, or a normal settled existence, he never realised his hopes or dreams, yet today he is numbered among the three greatest haiku poets of Japan.

Of the three most famous haiku poets Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694) is revered as the supreme master and founder of the modern haiku art.³⁵² His work is characterized by its almost religious depth and insight.³⁵³ His work is considered superior to all that has followed it.

Yosa Buson (1716-1783) is admired for his literary brilliance. His work is that of one who had refined his poetry with the imagery and allusion of Japanese poetic tradition.³⁵⁴ Much of his poetry cannot be truly appreciated by any but the literary man.

Issa is loved by the Japanese for his humanity and for his compassion for the small and weak. It was he, of all haiku poets who made the tiny haiku a vehicle for expressing what everybody, including common and ordinary people, feels and knows. He wept and laughed, revealed his joys and his sorrows, his loneliness and despair. He bared his heart through his work. The basis of his uniqueness is here, his human response to his own situation broke the boundaries of poetic tradition, for he responded not as tradition and convention required, but as he felt. He worked within the framework, metre, and basic rules

of conventional haiku but filled them with an honest cry from a human heart.

While his work in general does not have the depth or profundity of Basho , although at times it does approach such, nor the sheen or literary brilliance of Buson, although he laboured long to improve himself in this area and some of his work is of a high literary standard, his haiku is understood by all who read them. His poetry catches the feelings and experiences of the ordinary man. His work comes from the crucible of human experience and suffering. It may not have the mellow richness of Bashō, or the shining refinement of Buson, but in this writer's opinion it is gold mixed with earth, neither pure nor polished, but none the less gold.

NOTES ON CHAPTER ONE.

1. This chronology is an abridged version of that found in the Comp.Works of Issa. Shinano Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1976-1979. vol. bekkan, p.15-47.
2. Historical and Geographical Dictionary of Japan. E.Papinot, Tuttle press 1972, p.574.
3. See chronology.
4. Buson : Issa Nihon Koten Bungaku Kanshō vol. 32 p. 230.
5. Kobayashi Issa, by Urifu Takuzō. Kadokawa Shōten 1980. p.8.
6. Buson:Issa, Nihon Koten vol.32. p.230.Maruyama p.9.
7. 'sankin kotai' was a system of 'alternate attendance' by which daimyōs were obliged to spend several months every year at Edo and to leave their wives and families behind when they returned to their fiefs.
8. Kobayashi Issa, by Maruyama Kazuhiko. Ōfusha press 1979. p.10.
9. Kobayashi Issa, Mukudori no Haijin, by Kaneko Tōta, Kodansha Press. 1981. p.25.
10. Haikaiji Issa no Geijitsu, by Takai Sōfu, Gyōsei Tsu-shinsha 1978. p.59.
The Year of My Life. Yuasa Nobuyuki, Univ. of Cal. Press 1960. p.1.
11. Kaneko. p. 23.
12. Ibid. p.23. Maruyama p.9.
13. 'kabuki!', the most popular form of traditional theatre in Japan.
14. Takai p.57. Maruyama p.10. Kaneko p.23.
15. Urifu p.10.
16. Ibid. p.1.
17. Comp. Works vol.4 p.202. Hachiban Nikki.
18. Ibid. vol 3. p.519. Nanaban Nikki.
'Kaga', one of the seven provinces of the Hokuriku region, now part of Ishikawa prefecture.
19. Comp. Works vol.4 p.141. Hachiban Nikki.
20. Kaneko p.18.
21. Comp. Works vol.4 p.143. Hachiban Nikki.

22. Comp. Works. vol.3. p.269. Nanaban Nikki.
23. Ibid. vol. 4 p.95. Hachiban Nikki.
24. Ibid. vol. 3 p.173. Nanaban Nikki.
25. The words kokoro kara can be translated 'from the heart' and mean 'sincerely' or 'with all one's might'. Issa imagines the snow to be deliberately and wilfully falling upon him.
26. The word furare is used here as a pun. The Chinese character Issa used was the one for the verb furu which means 'to fall', as with rain or snow.

Used in the passive as it is here it can be translated literally as 'fallen upon by'. In its passive form the word furu is phonetically the same as the verb furareru, to be rejected or spurned.

27. Comp. Works vol.2 p.412. Bunka Kuchō.
28. Ibid. vol.3 p.458. Nanaban Nikki.
29. Ibid. vol.3 p.285.
30. Ibid. vol.3 p.29.
31. Maruyama p.12.
32. Takai p.59.
33. Buson: Issa Koten vol.32 p.232.
34. Takai p.59. Urifu p.15
35. Comp. Works. vol.6. p.147.
36. Maruyama p.13.
37. Kobayashi Issa, by Ito Masao, Sanseido Press 1942.
p.111
38. Buson: Issa, Koten vol.32 p.232.
39. Urifu p.15, Takai p.59.
40. Comp. Works vol.5 p.86. Chichi no Shūen Nikki.
41. Maruyama p.15.
42. Kaneko p.29.
43. Urifu p.30. Also Comp. Works vol.7 p.251, 252, 266.
Records of letter to Issa from his father.
44. Kaneko p.29.
45. Ibid. p.29
46. Buson: Issa, Koten vol.32. p.236
47. Comp. Works. vol. 5. p.86. Chichi no Shūen Nikki.
48. Ito p.112.

49. Urifu p.20.
50. Ito p.97.
51. Ito p.112.
52. Ito p.112
53. Kaneko p.26-27.
54. Ibid. p.27.
55. Ito p.111.
56. Urifu p.15.
57. Kaneko p.32
58. Ibid. p.32
59. Comp.Works vol.5 p.75 Chichi no Shūen Nikki.
60. Ibid. vol.5 p.86
61. All references to age in this thesis are calculated in the western manner rather than in the traditional Japanese manner, which commenced at one from the time of birth, and two from the first of Jan.
of the first new year after the child's birth.
62. Comp,Works vol.5.p.87. Chichi no Shūen Nikki.
63. Ibid, vol.5 p.75
64. Maruyama p.17.
65. Comp.Works fol.5 p.86. Chichi no Shūen Nikki.
66. Maruyama p.17.
67. Ibid. p.17.
68. Urifu p.51.
69. Comp.Works vol.5 p.75. Chichi no Shūen Nikki.
70. Ibid vol.4 p.417.
71. Maruyama p.18.
72. Urifu p.24.
73. New Japanese English Dictionary. Kenkyūsha 1954.
74. Comp.Works vol.3 p.381.
75. Ibid.vol.6 p.155 Ora ga Haru.
76. World Within Walls. Keene. Tuttle press 1978. p.531.
77. Maruyama p.20.
78. Haiku Jiten, Kinsei Chikuma Sha Press. 1977 p.204.
79. Buson:Issa Koten vol.32. p.237.
80. Ibid. p.237.
81. Maruyama p.20.
82. Ibid. p.20.
83. Ibid. p.21.

84. Maruyama p.21.
85. Ibid. p.22.
86. Ibid. p.22.
87. Ibid. p.22.
88. Comp.Works vol.4. p.193. Hachiban Nikki.
89. Maruyama p.22.
90. Comp.Works vol.5 p.15. Kansei Sannen Kikō.
91. Buson:Issa Koten vol.32. p.237.
92. Maruyama p.23.
93. Kaneko p.88-89. Haiku Jiten Kinsei p.154.
94. Maruyama p.23.
95. Ibid. p.23.
96. Ibid p.23.
97. Comp.Works. vol.5 p.117. Haibun Shui.
98. Urifu. p.50-51.
99. Maruyama p.24.
100. Comp.Works vol.7 p.371.
101. Maruyama p.24.
102. Ito p.138
103. Maruyama. p.25.
104. Ibid. p.27.
105. Ito p.131-135
106. The record of Bashō's third major journey, widely considered to be his finest work.
107. Ito p.131.
108. Comp.Works vol.5. p.84. Chichi no Shūen Nikki.
109. Comp.Works vol.5 p.64 note no.136 Kashiwara town is very close to Yoshino in Nara prefecture.
110. Comp.Works vol.5 p.70.
111. Ibid..p.14.
112. Ibid. vol.2 p.52.
113. Ibid. vol.2 p.54.
114. Natsume Seibi (1748-1816). Edo, Asakusa Kuramae district. Merchant, broker. Haiku Jiten p.183.
115. Ōgawa Ryūsa, died 1799. Oil merchant of Mabashi town Shimosa province. Kaneko p.36.
116. Ippyō (1769-1840). Nichiren priest of Hongyō temple, Yanaka district of Edo. Haiku Jiten p.17
117. Suzuki Michihiko (1756-1840). Edo physician turned haiku poet. Haiku Jiten p.348

118. Kaneko p.87
119. For example see Maruyama p.24.
120. Maruyama p.24.
121. Hasegawa Bakō (1686-1751). Haiku poet. Studied under Sodō and succeeded him as leader of the Katsushika school.
122. Buson:Issa Koten vol.32 p.238.
123. Maruyama p.37.
124. From Kamoshiron a collection of verse edited by Somaru. Issa's verse is dated April 1788, written just a few weeks prior to his 25th. birthday. See Maruyama p.26.
125. From Bakō Gojūnenkaikishū. Issa's verse is dated May 1788. Issa 25 years old. See Maruyama p.117.
126. Ibid. p.26.
127. From Shuganshū, a collection of verses edited by Somaru dated 1790. See Maruyama p.65.
128. Ibid.
129. Maruyama p.27.
130. For theory see Kaneko p.43.
131. Issa's first major work. A travel diary written in 1791.
132. Comp.Works vol.5. p.15.
133. Ibid. bekkan p.53.
134. Kaneko p.14.
135. Comp.Works vol.5. p.22. Kansei Sannen Kikō.
136. The word matsu is used as a pun. It means both 'to wait' and 'pine tree'. Both meanings have been translated.
137. Comp.Works vol.5 p.22-23. Kansei Sannen Kikō.
138. Ibid. bekkan p.19.
139. Ibid. p.19-21.
140. Maruyama p.33. Buson:Issa Koten vol.32 p.240-241.
141. Buson:Issa Koten vol.32. p.240.
142. Kaneko p.43.
143. Comp.Works bekkan p.53.
144. Ito p.144.
145. Kaneko p.43.
146. Maruyama p.32-33.

147. Maruyama p.32
148. Buson:Issa. Nihon Bungaku Kenkyū Shiryō. Yūseidō Press. 1975. p.266.
149. Maruyama p.32. Kaneko p.83.
150. Comp. Works bekkān p.19.
151. Maruyama p.33.
152. Kaneko p.42,43, and 49. Buson:Issa Kōten vol.32 p.240.
153. Kaneko p.44.
154. Comp. Works vol.2. p.51. Kansei Kuchō.
155. Ibid.
156. Ibid. vol.5 p.34-68.
157. Takakuwa Rankō (1725-1797). Born in Kanazawa but moved to Kyōto. Haiku Jiten p.374.
158. Inoue Jukō (1737-1803) Born and lived in Kyōto. Haiku Jiten p.151.
159. Emori Gekkyō (1755-1823). Born and lived in Kyōto. Haiku Jiten p.99.
160. Jōsa, contemporary of Issa, dates unknown.
161. Maruyama p.33
162. Asai Ōemaru (1721-1804). Haiku poet of Ōsaka where he ran a courier agency. Haikai Jiten p.35.
163. Shōroku (died 1816). Born in Ōsaka, lived near Takatsumiya. Haiku Jiten p.168.
164. Katsumi Jiryū (1722-1804). Born Kaga Yamanaka, travelled as poet all over Japan, settled in Ōsaka when fifty years of age. Haiku Jiten p.171.
165. Kurita Chodō (1748-1813). Born Matsuyama in Iyo province Shikoku. City elder for many years. Great friend of Issa's. Haiku jiten p.227.
166. Comp. Works vol.6 p.238. Sankanjin.
167. Ibid. vol.5 p.46.
168. Ibid. vol.2 p.54. Kansei Kuchō.
169. Ibid. vol.5. p.49 Saigoku Kikō.
170. Kaneko p.71.
171. Ibid p.71.
172. Kobayashi Issa Kansei Nananen Kikō. Ehime Shuppan Kyōkai 1967. Wada Shigeki. p.66-67.
173. Ibid. p.66-67.
174. All Issa's movements on this journey can be traced

- in the four works Kansei Kuchō, Saigoku Kikō, Tabishui and Sarabakasa. They are well recorded in the chronology in Comp.Works bekkān p.19-22.
175. Kaneko p.47.
 176. Ibid p.49.
 177. Ibid. p.49.
 178. Ibid. p.52.
 179. Ibid. p.55.
 180. Kaneko p.56.
 181. Ibid. p.56.
 182. Comp.Works. vol.6. p.238. Sankanjin.
 183. Kaneko p.60.
 184. Ibid. p.61.
 185. Ibid. p.61. For Tabishui see Comp.Works vol.6 p.190-207.
 186. Personal observation.
 187. Kaneko p.67.
 188. Ōshima Ryōta.(1717-1787). Born in Shinano but spent much of his life in Edo as a haiku poet.
 189. Kaneko p.69. For Sarabakasa see Comp.Works vol.6 p. 210-223.
 190. Comp.Works. vol.6. p.210-223.
 191. Maruyama p.37.
 192. Comp.Works vol.6. p.330. Shokan.
 193. Kaneko p.69.
 194. Ibid. p.82.
 195. Comp.Works bekkān p.22.
 196. Ibid. p.22.
 197. Ibid. p.23
 198. Ibid. p.21.
 199. Ibid. p.23.
 200. Comp.Works vol.5 p.69-86.
 201. Maruyama p.40.
 202. Kaneko p.160.
 203. Comp.Works vol.5. p.78. Chichi no Shūen Nikki.
 204. Ibid. p.86.
 205. The will was made just before Issa's father died in 1801 and was not completely settled until 1813 when reconciliation was made with Senroku. See Comp.Works bekkān p.23 and 33.

206. Comp.Works vol.5 p.86. Chichi no Shūen Nikki.
 207. Maruyama p.40..
 208. Kaneko p.132-133.
 209. Ibid. p.138.
 210. Comp.Works vol.3 p.319 Nanaban Nikki.
 211. Ibid. vol.4. Bunsei Kuchō.
 212. Comp.Works vol.6 p.145 Ora ga Haru.
 213. Ibid. vol.2. p.226 Bunka Kuchō.
 214. Kaneko p.87.
 215. Ibid. 87-88.
 216. Comp.Works vol.2 p.237,238,242,244,261,358,364etc.
 217.. Kuriyama p.51-52. Maruyama p.17.
 218. Comp.Works vol.2. p.95-130.
 219. Kaneko p.86.
 220. Urifu p.148.
 221. Comp.Works. vol.2 p.219.
 222. i.e. He was so hungry himself that everyone he saw also looked hungry to him.
 223. Kaneko p.81.
 224. Sumō ranking begins at yokozuna (grand champion), followed by Ōzeki (champion), Sekiwake (junior champion), komusubi (third rank champion), these are the outstanding wrestlers. They are followed by 13 or 14 wrestlers graded from 1 to 14, in two groups, east and west. In all there would be about 35 wrestlers in the first grade.
 (personal observation).
 225. Maruyama p.45. Also Comp.Works vol.2 p.91.
 226. Comp.Works vol.2 p.125 Kyōwa Kuchō.
 227. Ibid. p.114.
 228. The wooden pillar is in the home of another and therefore Issa feels cold. Buson:Issa Koten vol.32. p.266.
 229. Comp.Works. Vol.2 p.112-176 Kyōwa Kuchō.
 230. e.g. Comp.Works vol. 2.
 p.78 Kōkinshū
 p.84 Ise Monogatari
 p.86 Shūishū.
 p.103 Gosenshū.
 p.216 Manyōshū.

231. Comp.Works vol.2 p.246. Maruyama p.42.
232. Comp.Works vol.2 p.389. Bunka Kuchō.
233. Maruyama p.42.
234. Iwama Otsuni (1755-1822). Came to Edo when 148 years old. Haiku Jiten p.41.
235. Kenbu Sōchō (1761-1814). Edo haiku poet, born in Edo.
236. Kaneko p.139. Buson:Issa Koten vol.32 p.242.
237. Comp. Works vol. 6. p.239. Sarabakasa was one of the two collections made during his journey into western Japan and for a verse by Seibi to be in it indicates some association before, or very soon after, this journey.
238. Haiku Jiten p.183. Tomimasu Kanrai (1748-1817) one time disciple of Ryōta. Haiku Jiten p.65.
239. Shimizu Ippyō (1769-1840). Nichiren priest of the Hongyō temple in the Yanaka district of Edo.
240. Kaneko p.139-142.
241. Kaneko p.94-96.
242. Kaneko 94
243. Comp.Works. vol.2 p.277, 278, 375etc.
244. Ibid. p.381, 384, 337, 369, 371,393, 395 etc.
245. Maruyama p.44.
246. Ibid p.44.
247. Kaneko p.143.
248. Ibid. p.149.
249. Comp.Works vol.2 p565 . Issa also used this verse when his friend Kurita Chodō died.
250. Ibid. vol. 6 p.238. Sankanjin.
251. Maruyama p.44.
252. Comp.Works bekkan p.26.
253. Maruyama p.44.
254. Comp.Works vol.2 p.461. Renku.
255. Ibid. vol. 2 p.411. Bunka Kuchō.
256. Maruyama p.45.
257. Maruyama p.49.
258. Comp.Works vol.2. p.408.
259. Ibid. vol.2. p.481. Kaneko p.164.

260. Urifu p.161.
261. Kaneko p.164.
262. Kuriyama p.99.
263. Issa later attributed his first wife's death to the lack of harmony between the two families living in the divided house. Comp.Works vol. p.143.
264. Urifu p.148.
265. Comp.Works bekkkan p.28. Maruyama p.46.
266. Ibid.vol.2 p.522. Bunka Rokunen Nikki.
267. Maruyama p.46. Comp.Works bekkkan p.28.
268. Comp.Works bekkkan p.28.
269. Ibid. vol.3 p.26.
270. Ibid. p.61.
271. Ibid. p.61.
272. Ibid. vol.3 p.96.
273. Ibid. vol.6 p.14.
274. Ibid. p.42.
275. Ibid. vol.3 p.179.
276. Ibid. vol.6 p.180.
277. Kaneko p.140. Comp.Works vol. 8 p.394.
278. Maruyama p.47
279. Kaneko p.82.
280. Ibid. 140.
281. Ibid. p.82-83.
282. Ibid. p.83.
283. Comp.Works bekkkan p.363.
284. Ibid. p.371.
285. Ibid. vol. 3 p.212.
286. Ibid vol.3 p.25.
287. Kaneko p.131.
288. Maruyama p.147. Kaneko p. 159-161.
289. Comp.Works. vol.3 p.170. Nanaban Nikki.
290. Maruyama p.51.
291. Maruyama p.49.
292. Comp.Works vol.3. p.329.
293. Ibid. vol.6 p.227.
294. Ibid vol.6 p.156. Ora ga Haru.
295. Ibid. vol.3 p.386-401.
296. Ibid vol.3. p.449-483.
297. Ibid, vol.3. p.454.

298. Maruyama p.51. Asagi Sora is an alternative name given to the poems listed in Comp. Works vol.5 p.155-174 under the title Issa Jihitsu Kushū. They are not completely identical and the verse Maruyama quotes is not included in the Comp.Works.
299. Comp.Works vol.3 p.483.
300. Ibid. vol.6 p.381.
301. Maruyama p.51.
302. Maruyama p.52
303. Maruyama p.52.
304. Ibid.
305. See map. Comp.Works bekkān, photograph section prior to numbered pages.
306. Comp.Works vol.3 p.328. Nanaban Nikki.
307. Ibid vol.2 p.325. Bunka Kuchō.
308. Hana no kage was used to mean 'a life of ease'.
309. Comp.Works vol.4 p.581. Bunsei Kujūnen Kuchō.
310. Maruyama p.54.
311. Kaneko p.193.
312. Comp.Works vol.4 p.370. Bunsei Kuchō.
313. Ibid. p.405. Bunsei Kuchō.
314. Ito p.258.
315. Kaneko p.192-293
316. Comp.Works vol.3 p.305. Maruyama p.57.
317. Ibid. vol.5. p.131. Haibun Shūi.
318. Maruyama p.58.
319. Comp.Works vol.6 p.365.
320. Ibid. bekkān p.43.
321. Ibid. p.36.
322. Ibid. vol.3 p.431. Nanaban Nikki.
323. Ibid. p.536.
324. Ibid. p.567. Nanaban Nikki.
325. Ibid vol.6 p.133-176.
326. Ibid. bekkān p.40.
327. Ibid. vol.6 p.150. Ora ga Haru.
328. Ibid. p.153. Ora ga Haru.
329. Ibid. vol.4 p.386. Bunsei Kuchō.
330. Kaneko p.191.

331. Comp.Works bekkkan p.41.
332. Comp.Works vol.5 p.140.
333. Ibid. p.140. Haibun Shūi.
334. The broth is a funeral offering to the dead child.
335. Comp. Works vol.4 p.153. Hachiban Nikki.
336. The word kagerō is used as a conventional seasonal word for spring but is also used to imply tears, both meanings are included in the translation.
337. Comp.Works bekkkan p.42.
338. Ibid. vol.4 p.448. Bunsei Kuchō.
339. Ibid. bekkan 44. See Comp.Works vol.5 p.143-144.
340. Kaneko p.191.
341. Ibid, p.192.
342. Comp.Works vol.6 p.405.
343. Ibid. bekkan p.44.
344. Issa, by Fujisawa Shūhei Bungei Shunjū Press 1978. p.311.
345. Comp.Works bekkkan p.45.
346. Ibid. p.45.
347. Ibid. p.46.
348. Ibid. p.47.
349. Ibid. vol.6 p.416. Shōkan.
350. Ibid. bekkan p.47.
351. Ibid. p.47.
352. Kaneko p.176-177.
353. Keene. p.79. Takai p.216.
354. Haiku Jiten p.326.

CHAPTER TWO.THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISSA'S DISTINCTIVE STYLE.Introduction

The structure of this chapter follows that which is most popular with Japanese commentators.¹ Each Japanese year period is taken as a section of Issa's life. His major works for that period are introduced and selected translations from each work are given. These selections are then analyzed in order to trace the development of Issa's poetic style in the context of his life.

This method is of particular importance in the study of Issa because of the great influence his character and everyday circumstances had upon his work. Much of his work cannot be clearly understood or fully appreciated without reference to the context of the situation to which Issa responded when he composed his poetry. While this may be true of almost any poet and his work, it should be constantly remembered that poetic convention in Japan considered it in poor taste for the poet's personal feelings to dominate his work. Subjectivity was traditionally subtle, controlled, and elegant.²

The submergence of subjective personal feelings and a complete devotion to the object of the verse³ is what gives Bashō's work its depth, its almost religious flavour. His poetry can stand alone, apart from its creator. Indeed, we discover comparatively little about Bashō's life or about Bashō as a person, through his poetry.

What gives Issa's mature work its humanity, its earthiness, is the fact that Issa the man permeates almost all of it. For that reason it is important to study the development of Issa's style in the chronological and situational context of his life.

Classifications of Issa's Works.

Issa was a prolific writer. His extant works fill six large 600 page volumes. The number of his verses in existence is over 20,000. It is certain that we do not have all that he wrote for there are gaps in his numbered diaries.

Like most haiku poets Issa did not only write verses. His complete works can be divided into the following categories;

- (a) Kuchō. Collections of verses by the poet himself.
- (b) Kikō. Travel diaries into which haiku verses are woven.
- (c) Nikki. Diaries of events with suitable haiku verses inserted.
- (d) Kubun. Prose pieces interspersed with suitable haiku verses. Also known as 'haibun'.
- (e) Senshū. Collections of selected verses by other poets.
- (f) Renku. Collections of linked haiku verses composed by two or more poets.
- (g) Shokan. Personal letters to friends and other poets in which verses are often included.

List of Works from Which Selected Translations are Given.

The works of Issa introduced in this chapter, in chronological order and divided into Japanese year periods, which make up the sections of this chapter, are as follows;

Section 1. THE KANSEI PERIOD. 1789 - 1800.

- (a). Kubun. A Night's Lodging at Kisagata. 1789.
Comp.Works.vol.5 p.117.
- (b). Kansei Sannen Kikō. 1791.
Comp.Works.vol.5 p.13-32.
- (c). Kansei Kuchō. 1792 - 1794.
Comp.Works.vol.2 p.48-68.
- (d). Saigoku Kikō. 1795. Comp.Works.vol.5 p.33-68.

Section 2. THE KYŌWA PERIOD. 1801 - 1803.

- (a). Chichi no Shūen Nikki. 1801.
Comp.Works.vol.5 p.69-113.
- (b). Kyōwa Ninen Nikki. 1802.
Comp.Works.vol.2 p.69-87.
- (c). Kyōwa Kuchō. 1803. Comp.Works.vol.2 p.89-178.

Section 3. BUNKA PERIOD, first half. 1804 - 1808.

- (a). Bunka Kuchō. 1804-1809.
Comp.Works.vol.2 p.179-441.
- (b). Kubun. The Collapse of The Eidai Bridge. 1807.
Comp.Works.vol.5 p.118-119.
- (c). Kubun. The Woman Named Otsuru of the Konpira Shrine.
1808. Comp.Works.vol.5 p.119-120.
- (d). Kubun. A Thorny Flower. 1808.
Comp.Works vol.5 p.124-125.
- (d). Kubun. A Record of My Cherry-Blossom Viewing. 1808.
Comp.Works.vol.2 p.465-472.

Section 4. THE BUNKA PERIOD, second half. 1810 - 1817.

- (a). Nanaban Nikki. 1810 - 1815.
Comp.Works.vol.3 Whole volume.
- (b). Kubun. Waga Haru Shū. 1810.
Comp.Works.vol.6 p.13-40.
- (c). Kubun. Commiseration Over a Shipwreck. Not later
than 1812. Comp.Works.vol.5 p.125.
- (d). Kubun. Elegy to Nakamura Keikoku. 1813.
Comp.Works.vol.5 p.129-130.
- (e). Kubun. A Fifty Year Old Bridegroom. 1814.
Comp.Works.vol.5.131.

Section 5. THE BUNSEI PERIOD. 1818 - 1827.

- (a). Hachiban Nikki. 1819 - 1821.
Comp.Works.vol.4 p.31-231.
- (b). Kubun. A Strange Tale of the Myōsen Temple. 1819.
Comp.Works. vol.5 p.137
- (c). Ora ga Haru. 1819. Comp.Works. vol.6 p.133-176.
- (d). Kubun. Supplication to Mida Buddha at New Year 1820.
Comp.Works. vol.5 p.137.
- (e). Kubun. Lament Over the Death of Ishitaro. 1821.
Comp.Works. vol.5 p.139-140.
- (f). Bunsei Kuchō. 1822-1825.
Comp.Works. vol.4. p.331-572.
- (g). Kubun. Lament Over the Death of Kōnsaburo 1823
Complete Works. vol.5. p.143.

In each period Issa also compiled collections of the verses of other poets (senshū). These are not included in the above list or in the translated sections. These collections are useful, however, because they give evidence of the poets with whom Issa was in contact. There are numerous minor works of Issa's that are not included in

the above lists. All his major works are included.

Method and Criteria of Selection of Translated Passages and Verses.

All the selected passages in this chapter are taken from the work THE COMPLETE WORKS OF KOBAYASHI ISSA (ISSA ZENSHU), published in 1976 by Shinano Mainichi Shinbunsha. This publication is in nine volumes. It contains every poem and all the prose of Issa's discovered up to that time.

Selections of both prose and poetry from 'The Complete Works of Issa' were made by comparing the poetry and prose considered most illustrative and appropriate for the tracing of Issa's distinctive style by the authors of the following standard works on Issa;

1. Ito Masao Kobayashi Issa. Sanseidō Press. 1942.
2. Maruyama Kazuhiko. Kobayashi Issa. Ōfusha. 1965.
3. Kuriyama Riichi. Kobayashi Issa. Chikuma Shobō. 1970.
4. Kaneko Tōta. Kobayashi Issa Mukudori no Haijin. Kodansha Press. 1981.
5. Murata Noboru. Haikaiji Issa no Geijitsu. Nishinihon Tōyōbunkakenkyūsho. 1969.

These prose sections and verses were then traced in 'The Complete Works' and translated in chronological order.

In section five, translations from Issa's work 'Ora ga Hara' are not given because this work is already translated into English by Nobuyuki Yuasa in his book 'The Year of My Life' Univ. of California Press. 1960.

All verses quoted are taken from this work using Nobuyuki Yuasa's translations unless otherwise stated.

Method of Identification of Poems.

Each poem will be given two numbers, the first number indicates the section in which the poem is found, the second number indicates the place of the poem within that section. I.e. the first poem in Section 1. THE KANSEI PERIOD. will be 1.1. the second 1.2. The first poem in Section 2. THE KYOWA PERIOD. will be 2.1. and the second 2.2. and so on.

Section 1. THE KANSEI PERIOD. 1789 - 1800.

Selected Translations.

(a) Kubun. A Night's Lodging at Kisagata.

Introduction.

This fragment of Issa's very early work was found in the Ryokakushū (Collection of The Verses of Travellers) at the Kanman temple at Kisagata,⁴ a town on the coast of Akita prefecture, an area of great natural beauty made famous among haiku poets by Bashō's visit there recorded in his famous work Oku no Hosomichi (The Narrow Road to the Deep North). The whole fragment is translated here. Kikumei was one of Issa's earlier⁵ pen names.

Translation.

About the time when the sun was setting over the waters to the west,⁶ I began to look for somewhere to lodge for the night, but first I took a little boat out into the middle of the lake from where I saw a villager hurrying home at eventide.

1.1. Kisagata ya shima ga kure yuku karihobune.

Ah! Kisagata,

Where, among the islets

The little boats at eventide

Carry the harvest home.

Kansei period
First year.
August, 9th.
Kikumei.

August, 10th.

Looking out at dawn, the lake, perfectly still in the morning air, reflects the cherry blossoms made famous by the poet-priest Saigyō.⁷

On the water they look like patterned silk set out to dry. The insects which live among the duckweed grieve at the passing of the night,⁸ as from the bottom of the lake the lonely sound of their crying wafts across the waters.

1.2. Kisagata ya asahi nagara no aki no kure.

Ah! Kisagata,

Even in the morning sunshine

The shades of autumn.

Kikumei.

(b) Kansei Sannen Kikō.Introduction.

This diary, still in existence, is the first of Issa's diaries and is most likely the first diary he wrote. It covers a three week period from March, 26th. until April, 18th. 1791. At that time Issa was approaching his twenty ninth birthday. This diary is the record of his first journey home to Kashiwabara after leaving there some fourteen years previously.

In English the title would read The Diary of a Journey in the Third Year of the Kansei Period. It is also known by the title 'Kansei Sannen Kikkyō Nikki'.⁹ The copy in existence is in Issa's own hand and is considered to have been made around 1807 after having been revised and rewritten from the original. It contains some 25 verses interspersed among prose written in response to situations and events he records as having encountered on the journey. The first few paragraphs are unreadable having been damaged in places by insects.¹⁰ Approximately two thirds of the work is translated here.

Translation

Meandering to the west, wandering to the east, a man out of his mind and with no fixed abode. Tomorrow he will eat in Kazusa and in the evening lodge at Musashino.¹¹ Like the white-capped waves which know no resting place, the foam rising only to fade away so easily I will call myself Issa.

In Celebration of A New House.¹²

It has always been the case, even up to this present time, that life is simply full of situations that never seem to be as we would wish them. The rich have no sons to whom to leave their wealth and those with many sons are in poverty!

Mountains but no water. Dwellings but no trees. To have both the mountains and the water is indeed a rarity, but just look now at this new house built by Nizaemon.¹³

Under its eaves flows the Tone river¹⁴ while in the distant mists, looking straight out over my knees as I sit here is Mount Fuji^{14a} and to one side of my head reaching up to the sky is Mount Tsukuba.^{14b}

The old man fishes from the river bank and the child pulls in his net while seen far off in the distance, as if in miniature, a man with his horse. In this place alone there is no fault at all in anything that one beholds.¹⁵ Ah, indeed, for a man of asthetic taste living here, the moon among the pines would breed within him a depth of heart and lengthen his days. Though life is like a little boat setting out against the waves, its very wake fading fast¹⁶, the man living here would feel deeply the transient nature of all things. In the close of the day at eventide when the mountain temple bell resounds, the white clouds which from time to time come down, would be themselves but mediators from the Buddhas lest we see too much!

Ah! but we men, we have eyes¹⁷ to see all these things but are like mere dogs before them. We have ears to hear

but we are like horses. When the snow in all its beauty falls, we curse it as something evil and in the clear nights when the mountain cuckoo calls, we hate the bird as a noisy nuisance. We see the blossoms and the moon but simply fall asleep!¹⁸ In terms of all that is around us we are undeserving sinners.

1.3. Hasu no hana shirami¹⁹ o suteru bakari nari.²⁰

The lotus flower blooms

Yet here am I

Picking my lice

And flicking them away!

8th.day.

Clear skies. Off I set along the road to home, but there are others travelling too, two women and two men. From Gyōyaku²¹ we took a boat to the Nakagawa²² provincial border crossing. The barrier guard, anger in his eyes and with a fearful countenance, looked despidngly at the women and began to turn them away. It seemed that he was not going to relax the laws of the land! The ferryman said to them, "Instead of passing by on the open road, use your heads, pass through the bamboo grove and go round the barrier!". Doing what he told them they were past the barrier in no time at all and indeed this they did without the aid of the clever tongue of one of the servants of prince Mōshu,²³ or the wisdom of 'the man at the bay'.²⁴

In just the same way as when one is trying to clean a square wooden receptacle with a round stick something always gets left in the corners and overlooked, so the two women passed through unnoticed. Indeed we live in

days we should be thankful for!

1.4. Bara no hana koko o matage to saki ni keru,

In bloom

Creeping, spreading even here,

The thorny briar.

9th.day.

Stayed overnight at the home of Tosen.²⁵

10th.day.

Clear skies. From before the great Confucian
chamber at Yujima²⁶ I made my way towards Hongō²⁷ and the
beginning of the the road to my home town. Thoughts²⁸
of the journey that lay before me flooded my heart and I
rested in the shade of the trees before setting out along
the way. After crossing the ferry at Toda,²⁹ I reached the
post town of Warabi³⁰ as the light of day was fading fast.

When a provincial lord lodges on his journey, in no
time at all, the red and white striped hangings are put
all around the inn or house, fresh clean sand is strewn
upon the ground all around, the banners of his retainers
flutter at the corners of the building and to the left
and right guards are posted to watch for and put pay to
bad or suspicious looking fellows.³¹

But to the lonely wanderer no-one rents a lodging and
who can blame them? He is turned off the very highway
itself. The trees become his lodging and the grass his
bed and because he thus intended from the very outset, he
is not surprised at all, but rests his weary limbs while
thinking of the next village further on. On the other
hand, when the rain falls from the darkened skies³² and
the contrary winds sweep round the hem of the traveller's
garments a voice from behind will call out, "I will give

you a lodging", and happily, as if the very gods themselves had intervened according to their plans, he spreads his straw mat carefully, as if it were the most important thing he owned, and trusting himself to the buddhas, spends the night.

11th.day.

At the entrance to the town of Urawa³³ is the great shrine of Tsukinomiya.³⁴ It is in a wood which is quite small but of lush foliage.

1.5. Warunemui ki o hikitateru wakaba kana.

Arousing me

From my fitful sleep,

The fresh green leaves.

In the town of Ōmiya³⁵ there is a large shrine said to be the biggest and the most important in the province of Musashino.³⁶ However, because it is situated a little over a mile into the pine forest I nodded in its direction and reluctantly worshipped from afar³⁷ as I passed by on my way. In this town many different flowers bloom upon the roofs of the houses. They appeared to me like a scene from the past, indeed they looked just like the houses described in the Genjūan records.³⁸

1.6. Kakitsubata keburī ni kakaranu hana mo nashi.

See the irises!

Not one among them

Not covered with smoke.

I stayed the night at Kakagawa Honchō³⁹ in the home of Gensei Miura.⁴⁰

12th.day.

Visited the Renjō temple, a temple built by

the Genji warrior Jirō Naozane⁴¹ as a symbol of his change of heart and decision to lead a different way of life. It is a moving sight to see the graves of Renjo (Naozane) and Atsumori⁴² side by side in the graveyard of this temple.

It was around the springtime of the year Angen⁴³ when the Heike prospered and like the sun rising in the morning, or the pine and the oak flourishing, they spread their glory everywhere. As the rain falls in every place so their power and glory increased as if at will from strength to further strength as it spread like the dew upon the flowering orchids.⁴⁴

But they that flourish must surely decline and so, as all that lives must go to destruction, they who moved the very world in the beginning and like the thunderous clouds⁴⁵ their power echoed far and wide, just as the sun and moon must fade each day and night, they lost their splendor.

They stirred up the waves of power against themselves and the Genpei Wars⁴⁶ were fought. The Heike armies melted like the morning frost and fluttered like leaves in disarray. They who had previously been as fiercesome as tigers were now like cornered mice within their hiding places.

The young Atsumori, gentle like a fresh and growing bamboo, was killed by Naozane. He, who only yesterday lived 'above the clouds'⁴⁷ tasting the pleasures of the courtly palaces, shining with the moon among the fragrance of the blossoms, passing the evenings playing upon wind⁴⁸

and string instruments enjoying verse and song, has found that such was not to be. For today the storm rises up in Suma and the rough seaweed becomes his last and final resting place, his grief passing on to his mother whose weeping in its constancy is like 'the chirping of the grasshoppers' at his pillow. Ah! the deep sorrow of it all, I see it as if it were all happening just now and I wring out my sleeves, wet with involuntary tears. All these things are but the outworkings of our predetermined destinies..Shame and glory alike are but a single dream and I myself am nothing but an illusion.

1.7. Kagerō ya mutsumashige naru tsuka to tsuka.

The impermanence of it all,
'Tis like a haze in spring.
But how harmonious they seem
Alongside each other now,
One gravestone and the other.

1.8. Koke no hana ware mo kokoro ni omou yo.

Moss flowers.
In my heart
I think so, too.

This verse was written by a poet named Fukaku. He was criticized as a writer of comic or nonsense verse, but he himself said that to argue about such things and glare in anger at each other, though commonplace among men, was meaningless for both critic and criticized alike. All men are but a mere dream anyway and at the heart of things the whole creation is but one big stage upon which we play!

North from Kumagai I passed through Higashigata village.⁵³ After crossing by ferry at Nakaze⁵⁴ I called upon the poet Sessha⁵⁵ only to find that he had gone to Kyōto. I then took the ferry to Isezaki⁵⁶ and as the day drew to a close the rain began to drizzle down.

1.9. Hototogisu waga mi bakari ni furu ame ka.

The cuckoo calls.

This rain

Does it fall

On me alone?

The people of these parts call the drizzling rain shigure .

1.10. Hito ni mi shi shigure o kyō wa ai ni keru.

I came to see a friend

But all I met today

Was drizzle.

In these parts, in the fields all around, mulberry trees are grown. The leaves are now fresh and green. Some of the people are stripping leaves from the trees while others are breaking off branches. Yet others hold out their aprons full of leaves while others are using horses to carry loads of leaves away.

Among all this activity was an old man on his way home. Bent double with age and with a heavy looking wicker basket on his back, he made his way slowly along with the aid of his stick. He looked like an inchworm crawling along a branch. I followed him along the way and after a short while we arrived at a humble little house. At the house was a frail old woman who, with the aid of

an eyeglass, was looking after silkworms. She was very thin and reminded me of the lonely looking weeds that grow from the trunks of dead trees, thin and frail for want of soil. She looked so old that I wondered if she would see tomorrow.⁵⁷

I felt it a pitiful thing that someone so old should thus have to work even at the very end of their days in this life. I greeted her and inquired after her health and this is what she said, "We had a son, our only child. How we loved him! He was the apple of my eye. We looked after him carefully and kept him from harm and danger. When we looked upon him he seemed to us more wonderful than the very moon itself. We took good care to guard him from the dampness of the evening dew and brought him up with vows to the gods of heaven and prayers to the gods of earth that he would grow up strong and true but somehow he was, it seems, not destined for long life in this world, for as the snow upon the firewood soon melts and disappears and becomes the smoke of eventide, he, too, left this world, although the year I cannot now recall.

Like a man who strays from the light of the candle and in the black darkness cannot find his way, or the rudderless boat upon the waves,⁵⁸ we were left with our grief, hating even the sound of the gurgling brook and cursing even the clouds up in the sky. We passed our years simply wanting to go and join him on the pathways of the afterlife, for as a spark of the flint once struck never returns to the stone⁵⁹ and like the running water which never retraces its course,⁶⁰ we know that he will

not come back to us.

Thus pondering in my heart I spend my fleeting life at this my daily task, poor as it is. If he were only here today he would have taken a wife and we could each day, both morning and night, spend our time offering prayers to the Buddha to prepare for our afterlife. Ah, what a fate is ours!"

All this she told me sobbing and with tears streaming down her face. I thought I would like to comfort them but found myself overcome by the sadness of the tale and could only weep along with them. The old woman continued, "At this time of the year when we are so busy with the mulberry leaves and silk cocoons we even forget to offer prayers on the evening of the day before the anniversary of his death, but as you a priest, have visited us the fire of our grief is rekindled and now we are terribly sad. I really feel it is an act of destiny itself⁶¹ that you have visited us and listened to our story. Our home is a poor and humble place⁶² but will you not please stay the night with us and offer prayers on the behalf of our dead son?"

Thus she urged me to stay, but not being a real priest, I did not know how to correctly perform the act she had requested. However, I did not want to go against their wishes so I decided to do what they had asked. I entered the house and hung up my wet clothes upon the wall to dry. It was by now, that time of the evening

when the sparrows under the eaves settle down their young, and the sound of the distant temple bell,⁶³ itself

impermanent, echoes out over the villages.

Before their little buddhist altar I lit a candle, offered incense and with a high-pitched voice and from an earnest heart, sang out the oft repeated Buddhist chants accompanying them with timely strokes upon the little altar bell.

While thus engaged, I noticed at the altar the Buddhist name given to the deceased child,⁶⁴ Kagetsu Shinji, died 11 years of age 14th. day of April in the 3rd. year of the Annei period, given childhood name Yataro. Quickly counting on my fingers, I realised that he was born in the same year as myself and that his given name was the same as my own. This coincidence being so amazing I asked his date of birth only to find that it was the 5th. of May, the same as my own!

The traveller who makes the road his home,⁶⁵ stays in many different sorts of dwelling and meets all kinds of people but never have I heard of anything so utterly amazing. I was simply dumbfounded, as if drunk with surprise. Could it be that I myself was actually dead too!?⁶⁶ No, no, it could not be, the itching of the flea and mosquito bites was proof enough of that! Had I been bewitched by some fox or badger⁶⁷ in the form of this old couple? No, it could not be, the leaves before me were real enough. I wondered could it all be but a dream that I had quietly fallen into while longing for my own dear home? But the dawn began to break and the moon was silver in the clear morning sky, the irises bloomed purple and the willow trees were green. Such strange things are not

rare in the illustrated novels popular these days, but to actually experience such a night for oneself must be very unusual indeed.⁶⁸

The old couple begged me to stay another night, but the uncanniness of it all filled me with fear and so not wishing to remain with them I took my leave and set out on my way. I looked back to see them as they bade me farewell. Their eyes were fixed upon me as I strode out heartily along the path.

It was nearly two in the afternoon by the time I reached the central highway.

17th.day. Visited the grave of Murakami Yoshikiyo.⁶⁹

Stayed the night at Yashiro.⁷⁰

18th.day. Tried to cross the Chikuma river but the waters were swollen even covering the small trees and shrubbery by the riverside. The waters seemed to stretch even to the very sky itself.⁷²

The day draws in,

Upon the mountain peaks

The snow lies in its whiteness.⁷³

The river mentioned in the poem partially quoted here flows even to this very day. The ferry boat was not operating here so I went on round to the crossing place at Koichi.⁷⁴

1.11. Samidare ya yuki wa izuko no shinano yama.

May rains.

Upon which peaks

Does the snow still lie

Among the mountains of Shinano?⁷⁵

Visited the Zenkō temple. The main temple was repaired this year and the Buddhist images shone anew adding their brightness to the serene light of the moon. The lotus flowers, about to come into full bloom, competed in their splendor with the dew in the Pure Land⁷⁶ in their beauty. The sound of the constant chanting of the Buddhist scriptures permeated the whole temple bringing peace of heart to all the worshippers there, while the ministrations of the priests brought cleansing from the impurities of this earthly life.⁷⁷

The completion of the restoration and repair work was being celebrated⁷⁸ and the brocade curtains of the inner sanctuary were open and all could worship and even I, though not a very faithful follower, thus came to share in this unexpected blessedness. I wanted to spend a night with all the other worshippers there at the temple and perhaps gain some blessing from the Buddha,⁷⁹ but I longed to get to my own dear home and so, with staff in hand, echoing a steady note upon the road, I went on.

1.12. Yūkeburi ta ga natsuyase o naku karasu.

The evening smoke rises,
For whom among those who have sweated
Under the summer sun
Does the crow cry out?

I entered my own village at eventide when the lamps were being lit and in my heart I felt how worthwhile my journey had been. How happy I was to see the healthy faces of my father and mother. How thankful I was. I

felt like a turtle finding a piece of driftwood upon
⁸⁰the open sea upon which to rest, or as one who sees a
⁸¹bright star on a dark night. I was so happy I was
 rendered speechless and for a little while could not
 utter a word.

1.13. Kado no ki mo matsu⁸² tsutsu ga nashi yū suzumi⁸³.

The same old tree

Waiting there at the gate

In the coolness of the evening.

(a). Kansei Kuchō.

This short collection of poems, numbering some 270 verses, was made by Issa during the first three years of his six year poetic pilgrimage to the western regions of Japan. He commenced this journey when he was 29 years old. A few of the verses in this collection relate to his life in Edo before he set out upon his journey. The copy of this book now in existence is a small size, made for carrying, and is therefore probably not the original although it is in Issa's own hand. It is the oldest Kuchō in Issa's handwriting in existence. It contains no marginal geographical jottings apart from a few general remarks. It is consequently of little help in tracing Issa's footsteps in any detail during these years.⁸⁴

Translation.

KANSEI FOURTH YEAR. (1792)

- 1.14. Matsutake no yuki ai no ma yori hatsuhi kana.⁸⁵
 Dawning
 From between the pine and bamboo decorations,
 New Year's Day.
- 1.15. Moshi furaba amatsu otome zo hanagumori.
 If it should rain
 We would see heavenly maidens!
 Blossoms, under spring clouds.
- 1.16. Omoitsukiya hate wa sakura mo mokuzu to wa.
 Have you ever thought
 That in the end

Even the cherry blossoms will be
Under the water just so much weed?

- 1.17. Sanmon ga kasumi mi ni keri tōmegane,⁸⁶
Seen through the telescope,
Three pennyworth
Of mist!

- 1.18. Itsu awan mi wa shiranu hi no tōgasumi.⁸⁷⁸⁸
Not knowing if or when
We will meet again,
I set out

Heading for the mists far off in the west.

- 1.19. Sori sutete hanami no mane ya hinoki kasa.⁸⁹
As if to view the cherry blossoms
I set out upon my journey
Wicker hat upon my newly shaven head.

- 1.20. Hizakari ya yoshikiri ni kawa oto mo naku.
The sun at its zenith,
The sound of the river
Overcome,
By the reedwarblers' song.

- 1.21. Hito satte kitsune no nokoru tomoshi kana.
The men depart,
The fox alone is left
Beside the campfire.

- 1.22. Matsushima ya hotaru ga tame no ichiri tsuka.
Ah! Matsushima,
Like milestones
For the fireflies!

- 1.23. Uma no he ni mezamete mireba tobu hotaru.
Awakened

By the fart of the horse

I see the fireflies

Fly away.

- 1.24. Chiru botan kinō no ame o kobosu kana.⁹⁰

The peonies fall

Spilling

Yesterdays' rain.

- 1.25. Tōshitamae ka hae no gotoki sō hitori.⁹¹

Please let me through

Just one poor monk

No more than a fly or a mosquito.

- 1.26. Suzushisa ya miru hodo no mono Kiyomigata.⁹²

In the coolness

A sight worth seeing,

Kiyomigata.

- 1.27. Kaze wa yaya miho⁹³ ni fuki iru semi no koe.

A gentle breeze

Blows into Miho,

Where cicadas sing.

- 1.28. Tsukikage⁹⁴ ya akasaka⁹⁵ kakete yūsuzumi.

The light of the moon

Over Akasaka

In the cool of the evening.

- 1.29. Yoi joroshu okazaki⁹⁶ joroshu yūsuzumi.

Fine courtesans,

Courtesans of Okazaki

All out in the evening coolness.

- 1.30. Shizukasa ya chosui no soko no kumo no mine.⁹⁷

On the bottom of the lake reflected

The towering clouds,

Ah! the stillness.

- 1.31. Sakazuki ni chire ya tadasu⁹⁸ no tobu hotaru.

Fireflies of Tadasu,

Come as you fly,

Come shine in the wine cups.

- 1.32. Tō bakari miete tōji⁹⁹ wa natsukodachi.

Tōji temple,

Only the pagoda can be seen

Among the summer trees.

- 1.33. Suzushisa ya tada hito yume ni jūsan ri.

Ah! the coolness,

In just one dream I travelled

Thirty two miles further on!

- 1.34. Shinmachi¹⁰⁰ ya ware ware mo me no yūsuzumi.

In Shinmachi

We, too, refresh our eyes

In the evening coolness.

- 1.35. Inaba yama¹⁰¹ ide soyo kaze ni yūsuzumi.

The evening coolness

Of a gentle breeze

From Inaba mountain.

- 1.36. Tamamukae minu yo no hito o matsuhogata.¹⁰²

Waiting at Matsuhogata

For the return of the spirit

Of one from the Unseen World.

- 1.37. Tōzainanboku fuki maze maze nowaki kana.

From the east, west, south and north

The winds blow and whirl.

A storm.

- 1.38. Sendō yo shonben muyō nami no tsuki.¹⁰³

Mr. Ferryman!

"No urinating on the water!"

Moon on the ripples.

- 1.39. Tsuyu no ma ya nijūyonnen no miyako ato.¹⁰⁴

Ruins of a palace,

Twenty four years,

The life of a dewdrop

Brief span indeed.

- 1.40. Utagata ya awa no nami no ma no heikegani.¹⁰⁵

Foam on the waves at Awa,

And between their ebb and flow,

Heike crabs.

- 1.41. Makezumō sono ko no oya mo mite iru ka.

A wrestling match.

Are the losers' parents

Watching too?

- 1.42. Kamakura ya ima wa kakashi no yashiki mori.

Kamakura.

Now the scarecrows guard

The homes of warriors.

- 1.43. Kisagata ya nami no ue yuku mushi no koe.

At Kisagata,

Sounding over the waves

Voices of insects.

- 1.44. Matsushima ya mitsu yotsu homete tsuki o mata.

Matsushima.

Three or four of its islets praise

And then the moon.

- 1.45. Samuki yo ya waga mi o ware ga nezu no ban.
 The cold night,
 I myself am my own
 Unsleping watchman.
- 1.46. Hizuchida ya aomi ni utsuru usugōri.
 The thin ice
 In the harvested paddy fields reflects
 The fresh green shoots.
- 1.47. Hito narabi chidori koma yori tsuzuku kana.
 A line of plovers,
 Do they extend all the way
 To Korea?
- 1.48. Sotobori no waruru oto ari fuyu no tsuki.
 In the castle moat
 The sound of cracking ice,
 The winter moon.
- 1.49. Kimi ga yo ya kaze osamarite yama nemuru.
 The emperor reigns.
 The wind subsides,
 The mountains sleep.
- 1.50. Okina sabi ushiro o aburu kodabi kana.
 The old man
 Being old,
 Warms his back
 Before the brazier.
- 1.51. Fuyugare ni kazeyoke tsukuru yamaka kana,
 In the winter bleakness
 Making windbreaks
 At a mountain home.
- 1.52. Soto wa yuki uchi wa susu furu sumika kana.

Outside the snow falls,
 Inside the soot falls!
 A home.

1.53. Sekishō yori fukimodosaruru samuki kana.

Blowing me back
 From the provincial barrier,
 A cold wind.

1.54. Inu hoete oya yobu kojiki samakaran.

A dog howls
 And the beggar,
 Longing for his parents,
 Will no doubt be cold.

1.55. Kimi ga yo ya kojiki e amaru toshi wasure.

The emperor reigns,
 And into forgetfulness
 Passes the year,
 That for the beggar was too long.

KANSEI FIFTH YEAR. (1793)

1.56. Kimi ga yo ya tabi ni shi aredo ke no zōni.¹⁰⁶

The emperor reigns,
 And though on my journey,
 Rice cakes with vegetables
 On a plate!

1.57. Yuamishite tabi no shirami o tsumi hajime.¹⁰⁷

Dousing myself with hot water,
 For the first time this new year
 I begin the sinful business of squeezing lice
 Which until today were with me on my journey.

1.58. Sato no ko ga edagawa tsukuru yukige kana.

The snow thaws

And by the riverside

Making little branch-rivers of their own

The village children play.

- 1.59. Tori mo su o tsukuru ni hashi no kojiki kana.

The birds make their nests

While under the bridge

The beggar lives.

- 1.60. Nekoronde wakagusa tsumeru hinata kana.

Dropped off to sleep

While picking fresh herbs

In a sunny spot.

- 1.61. ¹⁰⁸ Chigiriki ¹⁰⁹ na yabu iri chaya o shirasebumi.

Nuptial vows

The servants' holiday

A written note informing of

The teahouse.

- 1.62. ¹¹⁰ Tamaboko no chika michi tsukeri hana no hotori.

In the field

A short cut

Made beside the flowers.

- 1.63. Shincha no ka mahiru no nemuke tenjitari.

Aroused from noon drowsiness

By the aroma

Of fresh tea.

- 1.64. Aosudare byakue no bijin kayou miyu.

Seen through the green hanging screen

A white-robed beauty

Passing by.

- 1.65. Koromogae shibashi shirami o wasuretari.

A change of clothes.

For a little while

I can now forget

The lice!

1.66. Tomadou ya ka no koe saguru kichin yado.

Confused I listen,

Searching for the mosquitoes' whine.

Cheap lodgings!

1.67. Yo shigoto ya ko o omou mi wa kaya no soto.

Inside the mosquito net

The child sleeps,

While outside the mother works on

Into the night.

1.68. Kimi ga yo ya shigeru no shita no yasobotoke.¹¹¹

The emperor reigns

And among the lush greenery

A crucifix!

1.69. Tada hitotsu mimi kiwa ni ka no hane kaze
kana.

Just outside one ear,

The breeze

From a mosquito's wings.

1.70. Ka o yaku ya shisoku ni utsuru imo ga kao.

The mosquitoes around it burn

But aglow in the light of the taper,

The woman's face.

1.71. ¹¹²
Tamadana ya sunawachi ware mo kari no yado.

Spirit shelf,

For me, too,

This is a borrowed house.

- 1.72. Te tataite oya no oshiyuru odori kana.

Clapping hands

The parent teaches

The child to dance.

- 1.73. Shika no koe wakagoke nado ni nageki to ya.

The cry of the deer,

How full of grief it must sound

To young widows.

- 1.74. Aki no yo ya tabi no otoko no hari shigoto.

Autumn evening,

The man alone on the open road

Is busy

With needle and thread!

- 1.75. ¹¹³
Aso ikken isogi sōrō yagate kanna tsuki.

A glance at mount Aso

And hurry on,

For soon the October moon.

- 1.76. Hana no hara taga kasa shikeru ato ni kana.

Is that the impression

Left by someone's wicker hat,

In this field of flowers?

- 1.77. Kirigirisu shibashi futon no ue ni kana.

Just for a moment

Upon the bed quilts

The cricket.

- 1.78. Fuyugare ya arashi no naka no goshintō.

Amidst the storm

Lanterns before the shrine

In the winter bleakness.

- 1.79. Hagami suru hito ni mezamete yo samu kana.

Awakened

By the sound of someone's grinding teeth,
The cold night.

- 1.80. Uekomi ya fuyugaruru yoru no ame o arami.

Falling

Through the uneven mesh

Formed by the innumerable branches of the
winter trees,

The evening rain.

- 1.81. Kimiga yo ya tera e mo kubaru ise ¹¹⁴koyomi.

The emperor reigns.

Calendars from the Ise shrine

Are distributed

Even to the temples!

- 1.82. Kimi ga yo ya fune nimo narete uki no tori.

The emperor reigns

And the water-birds,

Now used to the boats,

Rock to sleep on them!

- 1.83. Kimi ga yo ya karabito mo kite toshigoromi.

The emperor reigns

And to the shrines and temples

Chinamen too have come

To see the old year out

And the new year in.

- 1.84. Omou hito no soba e warikomu kotatsu kana.

Squeezing in

Beside the one you love,

The hearthside.

- 1.85. Nariwai ya yuki ni anma no fue no koe.¹¹⁵
 A livelihood!
 The blind masseur's flute sounds out
 Amidst the snow.
- 1.86. Fundo yori ume o tondari misosazai.
 To and from she hops and flutters
 Twixt plum blossoms
 And muddy filth strewn earth.
 Jenny Wren.
- KANSEI SIXTH YEAR. (1794)
- 1.87. Hatsuyume ni furusato o mite namida kana.
 In the first dream of the year
 I saw my old home town
 Through tears.
- 1.88. Iwa ga ne yachiri oshiwakete fukujusō.
 Pushing up
 Between the base of the rock
 And the surrounding earth,
 An adonis.
- 1.89. Mado akete chō o miokuru nohara kana.
 I open the window
 To bid farewell
 To a butterfly
 Departing over the moor.
- 1.90. Kinuginu ya kasumu made miru imo ga ie.
 Till lost in the mist
 I look back upon
 My lover's house.
 Dawn parting.

- 1.91. Yuku hito ya ware yasumu ma ni tōgasumi.
 While I rest
 The traveller went on,
 Now far off into the distant haze.
- 1.92. ¹¹⁶
Naruto nāru naka o kojima no hibari kana.
 The larks of the islets
 Fly by
 At Naruto.
- 1.93. Kumo no mine mikoshi mikoshite aso kemuri.
 The cloud bank rises
 And overhangs
 The smoke of mount Aso.
- 1.94. Shishi ou ya susūki o hashiru yoru no koe.
 Chasing the wild boar,
 Running through the pampas grass,
 Voices in the night.
- 1.95. Sore de koso hōkō wasureme bon odori.
 Bon Festival dancing!
 Just the very thing
 For forgetting
 The servants' lot.
- 1.96. Shishigoya ya ikuban nezamenu hito no koe.
 For some nights now
 Guarding against the wild boar
 From the little hut
 Voices of the wakening watchmen.
- 1.97. Yaya neyoki yo to nareba yo no samusa kana.
 Just when the cooler nights
 Makes sleeping so much easier,
 How cold the night is!

- 1.98. Asa shimo ni nokaji ga chiribi hashiru kana.
 From the blacksmith
 Working in the field
 Sparks fly
 Onto the morning frost.
- 1.99. Sesenagi ya kōri o hashiru kashigimizu.
 Warm water from the boiled rice
 Flows over the ice
 Making a rivulet.
- 1.100. Hī chira chira mogasa ko ie no fubuki kana.
 The flickering light,
 From the little house
 Of those stricken with small-pox,
 Amidst the snow storm.
- 1.101. Ie kage ya fubuki fubuki no fukitomeri.
 Under the eaves of the house
 The winds of the snow-storm
 Can blow no further.
- 1.102. Fuyu ni tsuki iyoiyo iyo¹¹⁷ no takane kana.
 At last I can see
 The peaks of Iyo.
 The winter moon.
- 1.103. Kimi ga ogi no kaze asagao ni todoku kana.¹¹⁸
 The breeze from your fan
 Does it reach
 The morning glories?
- 1.104. Osoroshiki yanagi to narite tarui kana.
 What a fearful willow
 They have become,
 Icicles!

(d) Saigoku Kikō.

The title of this diary, or part of a diary, can be translated as 'Travel Diary of a Journey into Western Japan'. Issa's journey into western Japan lasted six years but the part of his diary which we have here covers only a period of just over three months from Jan.8th 1795 until April,9th 1795. This is the first quarter of the fourth year of the journey. Issa was 32 years old at this time. The oldest copy of this work in existence is in Issa's own hand.

The work in Issa's writing has no title. The title given here has been added later. This work has also been known as 'Kansei Kikō' and 'Kansei Nananen Kikō', but to more easily distinguish it from the 'Kansei Sannen Kikō' the present title is generally adopted.¹¹⁹

The fragment in existence contains some 90 verses of Issa's in the general framework of his travels. Issa gives notes in detail of the places he visited during these three months. A further 310 verses are written in the margin of this work. Only the last eight verses translated here are from those in the margin.¹²⁰

Translation.

KANSEI SEVENTH YEAR (1795).

1.105 Ganjitsu ya sara ni hatogoya to omoezu.¹²¹

New Year's Day.

Less than ever do I feel

This is a traveller's lodging.

- 1.106. Kojiki mo gomazu kumuran kyō no haru.¹²²
 No doubt the beggar, too,
 Sips his poor man's home made brew
 This New Year's Day.
- 1.107. Ume ga ka ni shōji hirakeba tsuki yo kana.
 The wafting fragrance of the plum blossom,
 I open the paper screen door
 And see the evening moon.
- 1.108. Nodokeshi ya ugo no hatake no asagemuri.
 Ah! tranquility.
 Over the fields after rain
 The morning mists.
- 1.109. Oboro oboro fumeba mizu nari mayoi michi.
 In the hazy moonlight
 I walk along the path
 But step in water
 Having lost my way.
- 1.110. Sato kasuminu satobito wa ware o kasumi to
minan kana.¹²³
 Mists fall upon the village
 But do the villagers, too,
 See themselves
 As so much mist?
- 1.111. Itsu no ma ni tsubkura wa mina sudachi keri.
 Before you know it
 The fledgling swallows,
 Every one of them
 Has left the nest.

- 1.112. Neko kawazu wa tsumi tsukuraji o susume

no ko.

"If you don't keep a cat
You will do us no wrong!"
Say the little sparrows.

- 1.113. Nekoronde chō tomaraseru soto yu kana.

Lying asleep
Making a place for the butterfly to rest,
Outside the house
In the hot spring at eventide.

- 1.114. Yamayaku yamabi to narite hi no kururu kana.

On the mountainside
The withered undergrowth is burned.
The mountain blazes
As evening falls.

- 1.115. Ika nobori aoba o idetsu iritsu kana.

The paper kites climb high
In and out
Among the fresh green leaves.

- 1.116. Harusame ya hitori hōdan ni haikai.¹²⁴

Spring rains.
When by himself, a Buddhist sermon.
When with another, haiku verse.

- 1.117. Chō to tome ni ware mo nana no o meguru

kana.

With the butterflies
I, too, wander here and there
Around the countryside.

1.118. Matsu sobie uo odorite haru o oshimu kana.

I grieve its passing,
 This springtime
 In which the pines flourish
 And the fishes dance.

1.119. Chō hitotsu butai semashi to kurū kana.

One butterfly
 Fluttering wildly around
 Above the floor of the temple dancing stage,
 Making it seem so small.

1.120. Koromogae kaetemo tabi no shirami kana.

The seasonal change of clothing,
 Even though I make it, too,
 The lice picked up on my journey
 Stay with me.

1.121. Ao ume ya gaki taishō ga hada nuide.

Unripe plums
 The 'King of the Castle'
 Is stripped to the waist.¹²⁵

1.122. Yama wa wakaba hito wa migaruki koro ni kana.

As for the hillsides, fresh green leaves,
 As for man, a feeling of lightness,
 This time of the year.¹²⁶

1.123. Shōben no mibururui warae kirigirisu.

Pissed upon!
 Come on now, shake it off with a smile
 Cricket!

1.124. Tōzai no hitogao potto hanabi kana.

Fireworks,

And for a fleeting moment

Peoples' faces

To the east and west.

1.125. Kawakami ni shibashi sato aru hanabi kana.

At the head of the mountain stream

Just for a moment

There is a village,

Fireworks.

1.126. Motaina ya hiruneshite kiku taue uta.

Sacrilege!

A noonday nap

Listening to others

Singing rice planting songs.

1.127. Shinobugusa hisashi no ue yo fuwa no seki.¹²⁷

Haresfoot fern.

Plant them on the eaves of the roof

At the Fuwa barrier.

1.128. Ware sukite ware suru tabi no samusa kana.

'Tis cold

On this journey of mine,

Though taken

For love of travelling.

1.129. Kimi ga yo ya kojiki no ie mo nobori kana.

The emperor reigns.

Is the beggar's house, too,

On the up and up?

1.130. Tsuki ya mukashi¹²⁸ kani¹²⁹ to narite nandaime.

The moon!

From ages past
 Crabs you did become,
 What generation are you now?

1.131. Mushi no koe shibashi shōji o hanarezaru.

The chirping of the insect
 For some time now
 Has not sounded far
 From the paper screen door.

1.132. ¹³⁰
Kusonoki ni nare mo tsukaeshi kakashi kana.

Did you also serve
 The great warrior Kusonoki
 Mr. Scarecrow?

Section 1. THE KANSEI PERIOD 1789 - 1800.

The Development of Issa's Distinctive Style.

(1). Issa and the Classics of Japanese Literature.

During this period we see no clear indications of the uniqueness that Issa was later to display. Many of his major characteristics as a mature poet are almost completely absent while we catch but faint glimmerings of others. Humour, for example, is difficult to find and there is comparatively little use of colloquial expression. Poems about poverty and the practical hardships of everyday life are almost completely absent and there is none of the stinging cynicism that he later displayed. Poems about children cannot be found and there are but few poems of which insects and small creatures are the subject.

During this period Issa was laying a conventional foundation in his quest for success as an accepted haiku poet. From the very outset of his quest Issa was a serious poet and as such, the foundation for his future depended upon a study of, and familiarity with, the traditional classical literature of Japan. There was no hope for any serious poet in Japan without this basic knowledge.¹³¹ The work of Bashō was founded upon the basic traditions of Japanese literature¹³² which depended upon a knowledge of the Japanese classics. In his early years in particular Issa, too, was an avid student of the same. A study of the past literature of Japan would of necessity include the Manyōshū,¹³³ Kokinshū,¹³⁴ Shin-kokinshū,¹³⁵ Ise

¹³⁶
Monogatari and all the other major collections of poetry, travel diaries and novels. Issa would also have needed to be familiar to some extent with the classical literature of China. A thorough knowledge of the work of Bashō would also have been of great importance to the serious aspiring poet, for by Issa's time, some one hundred years after Bashō's death, the great master was literally revered by all who took haiku seriously.¹³⁷

One of the basic reasons why Issa's early poetry shows little sign of what it was to become, is the fact that so much of his time would have been taken up by the study of the great classical poetry of the past. The study of past poetry was of the utmost importance to the novice, because the poetry of Japan derives much of its power to condense so much in so few words through reference and allusion to past verses, the meanings they contain and the situations they describe. The literary connotations and latent meanings in the words and phrases of past poetry, especially famous verses, could be used skillfully to add more meaning or even used in juxtaposition to create contrast, humour or parody. There was little hope of success without a basic knowledge of the great classics of the past.

This was particularly so since Issa lived at a time when there was a great revival of interest in things purely Japanese, a revival known as 'The National Learning'.¹³⁸

This movement was largely a rejection of Confucian rationalism and ethics in favour of emotional expression. The great literary works of the past, particularly the Manyōshū and the Kojiki, were the 'canon' of this movement. Motoori Norinaga, (1730-1801) the great Shinto nationalist and philologist, was a major driving force behind this revival and spent the major part of his life studying and writing commentaries upon the great classics of Japanese literature, seeking to derive from them the 'pure essence' of what was Japanese. As a contemporary of this man Issa may have been spurred on in his study of the classics, and certainly renewed popularity would have meant that copies were readily available to him. That Issa read some of Motoori Norinaga's work is evidenced by the fact that in the ¹³⁹Kyūteiki he lists four of them, Himokagami, a book on word usage, Kotoba no Tama No O, a work on Japanese syntax, Sugegasa Nikki, a diary of blossom viewing written in the style of the old classics and Tamakatsuma, a collection of notes on various subjects including old poetry, ancient customs, grammar and spelling, and ancient literature in general.

Early on in his life as a young poet, while he was still a novice under Chikua, Issa received a copy of the work ¹⁴¹Kanakuketsu, a study of word usage in examples of Japan's classical poetry, taken largely from the Manyōshū and the Kokinshū. It is not a large work as it contains less than thirty poems, but Issa's notes are

so extensive that they virtually comprise his first real written work since he was only thirty one years old when he studied it.¹⁴² This is further evidence of his studies in the classics from the beginning of his career

The Hōgen Zasshū¹⁴³ provides further proof of Issa's early efforts to master the classics. Hōgen Zasshū is a work by Issa which is a collection of provincial dialect words and common phrases. Issa continued this work until his last years. Since, however, it contains many words from the Shikoku and Kyūshū regions it was almost certainly begun during his travels there in the Kansei period. It includes numerous words from and references to poems or phrases found in the following works from Japan's literary past, Manyōshū, Ujishūi-¹⁴⁴
Monogatari, Kokinshū, Shin-kokinshū, Ise Monogatari,
Kojiki and the Shūishū.¹⁴⁵

Another piece of Issa's writing that indicates his interest in the classics is the Shin-zokoteikidaizen-¹⁴⁶
kakikomi. Written on the back of, and in the margins of, an Edo period folding map of Japan, it consists of jottings on a variety of subjects. It extends at least as late as 1818 but was begun towards the end of the Kansei period. Among his jottings Issa refers to the following works,¹⁴⁷ Tosa Nikki and Ise Monogatari.

Finally Issa made various notes and jottings in the margin of an Edo period study on Japanese poetry entitled Wakayaegaki.¹⁴⁸ Among these notes and jottings, references

to the ¹⁴⁹Nihonshoki, Manyōshū, ¹⁵⁰Genjimonogatari, Kokinshū, Shinkokinshū and ¹⁵¹Tsuretsuregusa can be found. Issa's notes are mainly in the style that he adopted as early as the time when he used the pen-name Kikumei ¹⁵²and were consequently begun early in the Kansei period. The notes cover roughly the period between 1792 and 1798 when Issa was between the ages of 29 and 35.

Issa, in the Kansei period, even tried his hand at composing verse in the longer ¹⁵³'naga-uta' style of poetry found in the Manyōshū. ¹⁵⁴His efforts are immature in both style and content but are further evidence that Issa, with no formal literary training, was exerting considerable effort in his attempt to absorb and master the traditional styles of the past and thereby build up a poetic base for his future life as a serious poet.

Among the poems selected for translation from the Kansei Kuchō and the Saigoku Kikō are some that refer or allude to verses in the Manyōshū (poem ref. 1.56), Goshūishū ¹⁵⁵(poems ref. 1.35 and 1.61), Shinkokinshū (poem ref. 1.14). Poem ref. 1.28 alludes to a verse by Bashō ¹⁵⁶and poems 1.24 and 1.30 allude to verses by Buson. ¹⁵⁷

In the prose passages selected for translation Issa refers to or alludes to verses or phrases from the Manyōshū (see notes nos. 16), Chinese classical literature (see notes nos. 23, 24, 59), Kokinshū (see notes nos. 8, 58, 60), ^{158a}Fugashū (see notes nos. 73, 75). On numerous occasions in his work Kansei Sannen Kikō, Issa refers to the Kaidōki, a travel diary of the Kamakura period (1192-1333).

In this way Issa's early interest in and use of the classics of Japanese literature can be traced. Issa's use of the classics was however immature.^{158b} He used phrases from the poems of the past without imparting to them fresh nuances or different shades of meaning, as did both Bashō and Buson. In consequence his references and allusions to the poems of the past did not add anything of significance to his early poetry. He seemed to use the classics simply to prove that he was familiar with their content. He neither subtly changed their significance nor made use of their contextual connotations to enrich his own verses.

As time went by, and as Issa began to realize increasingly that he was never going to be accepted as a haiku master-poet, his use of the classics decreased. In his mature work little reference to them can be found. Issa, however, remained interested in the classics to the end of his life as evidenced by the existence of the Haikaiji Shōroku,^{158c} a collection of old songs and poems, many from the Manyōshū and Kokinshū and also containing notes on the Kojiki.¹⁵⁹ This work is full of his personal notes on verses from the great classics of the past, and was a project Issa was working on almost until his death.¹⁶⁰

Issa never really abandoned his early conventional poetic basis. Indeed, participation in linked haiku verse, something which Issa practised all his life with a variety of partners, depended to some degree upon the

ability to produce good haiku in the conventional style, because the links were sometimes made by alluding to famous poems of the past, and to miss the allusion would be an embarrassment to the serious poet.

As, however, Issa increased his sphere of poetic influence and exposed himself to the styles of many other poets, and as in his everyday life he began to experience loneliness and poverty of an intensity unknown to most, he began to move outside the unreal world of Japanese conventional poetry, a world idealised in the great classics of the past. His poetry began to become an expression of what he saw and felt in the real world and thus his mode of expression and the subjects of his verses were found in the everyday lives of men in the real world, particularly poor and ordinary men.

In this respect it should be constantly remembered that Issa's mature distinctive style was developed primarily in his private verses, those he jotted down with no intention of rehearsing before others, while at the same time in the beginning of his life as a poet, his first efforts were made with a strong consciousness of the classical tradition of Japanese poetry.

It is not only through references and allusions that we can trace the influence of classical literature in Issa's work during this period. His first complete work, Kansei Sannen Kikō, is actually based upon the thirteenth century travel diary, the Kaidōki, which describes the journey of a man who travels from Kamakura to Kyōto to see his sick mother after having taken the vows for the

Buddhist priesthood. The content of the Kansei Sannen Kikō is greatly influenced by the work of Bashō and to a lesser extent by the highly appraised thirteenth century classic, the Hōjōki¹⁶² (1212) by Kamo Chōmei, the guardian of the Kamo shrine in Kyōto who chose a hermit's way of life.¹⁶³

(ii) Issa's Consciousness of Bashō During this Period.

Issa's consciousness of Bashō, when he wrote the Kansei Sannen Kikō, is unmistakable and reveals itself in many ways. Indeed the very fact that Issa began the first draft of this work and started on his journey home when he was twenty eight years old, the same age that Bashō was when he wrote his first major work,¹⁶⁴ may be more than just coincidence.

Issa's first pen-name, Ikyō,¹⁶⁵ was borrowed from a Chinese poet-priest named Rihaku. This priest also used the pen-name Tōsei, which was one of Bashō's earlier pen-names.¹⁶⁶ Issa's later pen-name, Kikumei, was taken from the first and last Chinese characters of Kikudaio Chōmei,¹⁶⁷ the former name of the author of the Hōjōki. It is also well known that Bashō admired this work greatly and was considerably influenced by it.¹⁶⁸ It is therefore quite likely that Issa was imitating Bashō in a number of ways even before he started the Kansei Sannen Kikō.

By the time Issa commenced this diary, Bashō had been dead for over one hundred years, but his work had become the yardstick by which all serious haiku poetry was

evaluated. It was because of this that Issa, from the very beginning of his written work, resorted to various devices to relate its form and content to the work of Bashō.

One outstanding example of this is his record of the night he spent in the home of the old couple who had lost their only son.¹⁶⁹ The woman mistook Issa for a priest and asked him to say prayers for the dead son. Issa agreed to do this and discovered that the dead son was born on the same day as himself and that their given names were also the same. These coincidences are related as facts and Issa insisted that they were the truth, but the whole episode appears so farfetched as to be almost certainly literary embellishment. But for what purpose? This incident indicates that the diary was not written simply as a record of his journey home. It was far more carefully contrived than that. It followed a set pattern whose roots were in Chinese literary convention and which Bashō and other poets before him used as the basis for their travel diaries.¹⁷⁰

Kansei Sannen Kiko bears some striking resemblances to Bashō's work 'Oku no Hosomichi'. Both begin with an introduction to the poet's circumstances and lot in life and both end with the description of a reunion with family and friends after a long absence.¹⁷¹ This in itself is out of character with everything else Issa ever wrote about his relationship with his step-mother Satsu and therefore rather than being true to fact might well be the ending demanded by poetic convention and Issa's

desire to imitate Bashō.

As in Bashō's work, accounts of places visited are interspersed with accounts of events seen and heard on the journey and related in episodic style. Towards the middle of each work, where a change is needed to stimulate the readers interest, a story is contrived.¹⁷² Bashō, in his work introduces an episode at the harlot's house near the provincial barrier,¹⁷³ whereas Issa relates the account of the old couple and their dead son. The content and literary merit of the two episodes are different, but their position in the composition of the diaries is for the same purpose. Issa takes the 'coincidence' to such extremes that the reader feels immediately that the story is contrived. It is overdone, as is Issa's description of his own feelings at this time, but the fact remains that the position of the story in Issa's work is an imitation of the composition of Bashō's work.¹⁷⁴

As well as being a clear indication of Issa's consciousness of the importance of the study of classical literature in his quest to become a recognised master-poet, the Kansei Sannen Kikō is also a clear admission of his awareness of and admiration for the great master Bashō.

Although it may sound contradictory, this same work is also a declaration that he was not going to imitate Bashō and that he was choosing a pathway that would lead away from the profundity of Bashō and the elegance of Buson, a pathway that was going to lead him into the real world of the everyday life of ordinary men. Such is the clarity of this declaration that some have

concluded that the Kansei Sannen Kikō, in its present form, could not possibly have been written by Issa so early on in his career as a poet, but rather that he wrote and rewrote his manuscript from the time of his original journey until he was over forty years of age.¹⁷⁵

Take, for example, the verse;

1.3. Hasu no hana shirami o suteru bakari kana.

The lotus flower blooms

Yet here am I

Picking my lice

And flicking them away.

The first line should lead on to a verse in praise of the beauty of the flower or the surroundings in which it blooms. It holds the promise of elegance and the praise of nature, and yet it concludes with the stark reality and baseness of Issa's preoccupation with the task of getting rid of the lice he has picked up on his journey, sleeping in the open and in the cheapest lodgings.

Issa wrote this verse at the newly built house of a rich friend or patron. He was actually sitting on the veranda looking out at the beautifully laid out gardens and their setting in the magnificent countryside.¹⁷⁶ It is reminiscent of a similar situation in Bashō's work, the Genjūanki,¹⁷⁷ where the common people are seen to be picking their lice while the poet alone contemplates the beauty around him. Issa in the prose preceding this verse declares himself among those who 'have eyes to see all these beautiful things but as a dog before them'. He concludes by declaring himself as sinful or unworthy.

His sense of sinfulness is not confined to the Buddhist concept of sin as the taking of life, even the life of the lice, but rather it is a sense of sinfulness and unworthiness at his reaction as a poet to his surroundings. He is not reacting to the beauty he sees in the way expected of the poet, his attention is taken up with base necessity of getting rid of the lice.

He thus departs from the pathway trod by Bashō, a holy seclusion that elevated him above the ordinary, a serene loneliness in which he refined his verses until they became profound masterpieces. Issa is declaring that he was unable to walk that path and that his poetic attention is going to be taken up with the ordinary things of life.

Issa carried this sense of unworthiness with him until the last. He, too, was to know great loneliness. However, unlike Bashō, it was not a seclusion he chose for himself and for the sake of his art. It was a loneliness of hardship, poverty, and necessity. It created in Issa not a pure desire to refine his art but rather sarcasm, cynicism, anger and an empathy with the small, the weak and the poor. His poetry in its mature and distinctive style was to become a unique expression of these feelings.

We have in the verse quoted above (1.13) an illustration of the tension that remained with Issa all his days. He admired the greatness of Bashō's work. He knew the standard at which he should be aiming and all his life he composed verses in the conventional style, and yet this other force was at work within him, a force which,

stimulated by his personal circumstances, was to lead him to different conclusions from those reached by Bashō. This tension is here evident from the beginning of his work.

(iii) Issa and The Katsushika School of Haiku During This Period.

Issa's first formal contact with organized haiku was with the Katsushika school. The influence of this school and its poets was to remain with Issa all his life. The Katsushika school professed to maintain the style and tradition of Bashō. Its founder Yamaguchi Sodō (1643-1716) was respected by Bashō as having a profound knowledge of the Chinese Classics and he was known to have composed linked verse with Bashō¹⁷⁸ and to have been on friendly terms with Bashō.¹⁷⁹

Though this school prided itself on its historical connections with Bashō it had, by Issa's time, like most other schools, degenerated to either haiku based on witty word plays and the use of common language for its own sake, and tended towards parody rather than enrichment in its use of the classics, or become moralistic. In the former it was somewhat similar to the pre-Bashō Danrin¹⁸⁰ style and in the latter the pre-Bashō Teimon¹⁸¹ style.¹⁸²

It was, however, a style easily understood by the common man. This was because of the general influence of Edo haiku upon it and the fact that Katsushika haiku was on the whole pastoral and rustic, because it had its base in rural Japan.

The fact that Issa received his first formal training in the Katsushika school is partly responsible for one of

Issa's major characteristics which stayed unchanged through the whole of his life, that of being readily and easily understood.

In the Kansei Sannen Kikō, Kansei Kuchō and Saigoku Kikō it is difficult to find any verse the meaning of which is not readily obvious. The verses of this period lack the power and the charm of his later work. They are more often than not simple statements in poetic form. Examples of this kind of verse are poems ref. 1.51, 1.60, 1.89. These verses are just simple poetic descriptions of people making windbreaks, someone dropping off to sleep in the sunshine, and a butterfly flying over a moor.

As Issa matured as a poet his verses in no way became either complicated or obscure. There is very little hidden meaning and not a great deal of poetic allusion. All his life he remained easily understood. This tendency was helped by the fact that he gradually moved outside the conventional poetic guidelines with their emphasis on the old classics and the world of poetic allusion that they created, and outside the imitative poetry typified by the Katsushika school, into the real world that he himself experienced, that of the poor and ordinary man. However, this major characteristic of simplicity was with him from the very beginning, because the majority of his early work, especially before setting out for western Japan, is modelled on the Katsushika style and this is one basic reason why it is not outstanding poetry. It did, however, deliver Issa from attempting a more obscure style. One major reason for Issa's later fame is this very fact that he is so easily understood. Katsushika haiku, because of its proximity to Edo, was influenced by the trends of Edo

haiku. Issa, too, was influenced by what was happening in this wider sphere.

In 1789, when Issa was 26 years old and undoubtedly studying seriously within the Katsushika school, the tenth edition of the Haikaikai, a collection of the ten best verses of the masters of the separate schools that made up Edo haiku, was published.¹⁸³ It showed that the preferences of the haiku masters in their choice of poetic subjects and backgrounds were the Ise Monogatari, the Genji Monogatari, Tsuretsuregusa,¹⁸⁴ the Kojiki, Kyōto place names, famous scenic spots, travel verses, court life and the use of colloquial expressions and common language. A considerable emphasis was placed upon the old classics and courtly life, together with the use of non-conventional poetic language.¹⁸⁴

By 1792, when Issa was 29 years old, a greater emphasis was placed upon rustic, pastoral and rural content. During the time that Issa was seriously studying haiku verse in and around Edo, Edo-haiku itself was moving away from the sensuous poetry inspired by the 'floating world' of Edo town life and was concentrating more upon the classical romanticism of the old literature together with a pastoral and yet more realistic attitude towards rural life.¹⁸⁵

By the Bunka period (1804-1817), which commenced when Issa was 41 years of age, the 'floating world' of Edo town life was no longer a popular theme in Edo haiku.¹⁸⁶ It was within this general background that the Katsushika school continued to develop its rustic pastoral style in which common words and phrases were

frequently employed. In this way it maintained the classical element and yet sought also to be true to Bashō's injunction;

'Do not follow in the footsteps of the men of old;
seek what they sought!' ¹⁸⁷

Bashō advocated that haiku should imbibe the spirit of traditional poetry without imitating its conventional poetic language. He said that it should have both permanence in that, while it did not imitate the classical poetry of the past, it maintained its spirit and objectives, ¹⁸⁸ and change, in that it was released from the conventional vocabulary and subject matter of classical poetry. ¹⁸⁹ In the Katsushika school the use of the colloquial was seen to be in keeping with the second half of this injunction.

There can be no doubt that during Issa's formative years as a poet he was greatly influenced by the Edo haiku scene in general and the development of these two distinct strains in its style, the courtly and the rustic, the classical and the vulgar and that what became known as the 'Issa style' was not unique in its content by any means. Issa's uniqueness lies in the fact that he passed these ingredients, ingredients common to much of the haiku of his time, through the crucible of his own experience and thereby created a new expression of the haiku art.

Together with the general influence of the Katsushika school and the wider Edo haiku scene, there were two poets in particular who had a strong influence on the young

Issa. They were Chikua, his first teacher, and Somaru the leader of the main Katsushika school under whom Issa studied after Chikua's death.

Chikua has already been mentioned in chapter one. His position in the Katsushika school was not in the mainstream led by Somaru. He had established an independent poetic residence which was more in the nature of a 'branch' of the main school. It was here that Issa first studied seriously. As has already been mentioned, Chikua advocated that each poet develop his own independent style and not seek to copy or even propagate any particular school or style at the expense of individuality. Issa was later to become a living example of this freer way of thinking. Issa loved and respected the poet Chikua. Issa's six year journey into western Japan was largely made possible through his association with this man.

The influence of Somaru can be recognised clearly in the early work of Issa. Somaru in his writing and poetry often used the colloquial and at times even low class common words. He also favoured verses that had a light touch and could easily be understood. Many of his verses were strongly moralistic, and unlike Issa's work, but those in which he used colloquialisms and commonplace words are similar in style and content to what was to become Issa's mature style.¹⁹⁰ They are, however, different inasmuch as they do not contain the strong subjective element that Issa's mature work contains.

Among Issa's verses to be found in collections made by

Somaru are the following;

Kankodori hiru uchimitsu no yamaji kana.¹⁹¹

Nine in the morning,

Upon a mountain path

The cuckoo calls.

Yamadera ya yuki no soko naru kane no oto.¹⁹²

Mountain temple,

From beneath the fallen snow

The bell resounds.

Shiohama o hago ni shite tobu chidori kana.¹⁹³

The tide-washed beach

His runway

The snipe takes off..

Toshi no kure hito mono yaru kura mogana.¹⁹⁴

The year draws to a close,

Would that there were a storehouse

From which

Gifts were given out to all!

These early verses of Issa's show a measure of wit, originality, parody, use of colloquial speech and even an expression, in a slightly cynical way, of his own poverty..

The first signs of his later style are discernable, but at the same time it should be recognised that such characteristics were not unique to Issa in any way, but were common to the work of others in the Katsushika school. The fact that they found their way into Somaru's collections is not a testimony to their originality

but more a recognition that they were similar to many of the verses that Somaru wrote himself.¹⁹⁵

(iv). Issa and The Tenmei Style .

Issa's journey into western Japan and his consequent exposure to a variety of poets of different styles was another basic molding influence upon his early life as a haiku poet.

In the Kansei Kuchō many of the poems in the conventional style are largely imitative and of only average worth, for example, poem ref. 1.56, and from the Saigoku Kikō ref. 1.105. There is no force or charm in these verses, which are safe in their reticence, and in the researcher's opinion, of just average merit.

However, among the conventional poems by Issa at this time are some which are obvious attempts at poetry in the more elegant and refined Tenmei style, for example, poem ref. 1.64, the white robed beauty seen through the green bamboo screen, and poem ref. 1.94, the voices of the hunters in the tall pampas grass at night.

In the Kyōto and Ōsaka regions Issa met and composed poetry with Rankō, Jūkō, Jiryū and Gekkyo. All these poets were to some degree involved in the Bashō Restoration Movement of which Buson, the founder of the Tenmei style, was a prime mover.¹⁹⁶ Kurita Chodō of Shikoku was also a poet of this style. Although Issa was undoubtedly aware of this style before his journey, it was during this journey that he began to compose in, and seek to master,

the Tenmei style.

Some of Issa's verses at this time are unmistakable attempts to imitate Buson and his disciples, for example, poem ref. 1.70 can be compared with the following verse by Buson;

Moetachite kao hatsukashiki kayari kana.¹⁹⁷

The taper flares

And in its glow

Ablush,

The woman's face,

As mosquitoes burn. Buson.

Or poem ref. 1.24 with;

Tsubaki ochite kinō no ame koboshikeri.¹⁹⁸

The camelias fall

Spilling

Yesterday's rain. Buson.

Or poem ref. 1.30 with;

Shizukasa ya chosui ni utsuru kumo no mine.¹⁹⁹

In the lake reflected,

The towering clouds,

Ah, the stillness. Buson.

Other verses written in the Tenmei style during this period include poems ref. 1.31, 1.32, and 1.48.

The Tenmei style is typified by the lack of subjectivity in these verses. Fireflies and winecups, pagodas and summer groves, the sound of ice cracking in a castle moat, are described in an attempt to create an impression of elegance and beauty, the spirit of classical poetry in Japan.

Generally Issa's verses of this period in the Tenmei

style are imitative and of only average worth but there are a few, even at this early time, which are of a high standard and which display a keen sense of observation in respect to the world of nature, a gift, which when more developed and directed towards everyday life and more mundane objects, was to become a major element in his mature distinctive style..

One of these very fine verses in the Tenmei style was the following, ref. 1.20;

Hizakari ya yoshikiri ni kawa oto mo naku.

The sun at its zenith,

The sound of the river

Overcome

By the reedwarblers song.

The contrast of the sounds and size of the tiny bird and the river, and the obvious perceptiveness of the poet of these things on a still, bright summer's day, create a masterpiece of poetry, which is both pastoral and elegant.

It is a beautiful verse and its choice of subject and the contrast portrayed, bear Issa's stamp upon it. Another verse of fine quality in the Tenmei style is the poem ref. 1.46. After the rice is harvested, fresh green stalks begin to grow from the stubble left in the fields. As winter approaches the green of these stalks is reflected in the thin ice covering the paddy fields, often the only fresh greenery to be seen in this season.

Issa was undoubtedly attracted to the delicate impressionistic beauty of the Tenmei style from the beginning of his career as a poet. He was later to react against the stagnation into which the Tenmei style fell.²⁰⁰ It proved to be too far removed from the realities of the difficult life he was to lead. Yet he never completely discarded it. Indeed, until the very end of his life he was still producing verses in this style, but even more important, the Tenmei style was incorporated into his distinctive mature style.²⁰¹

Issa never allowed himself to degenerate into a purely vulgar style. The temptation to do this was constantly with him. Much of the versifying of the Edo populace was purely for vulgar fun, often a lewd reaction to serious poetry. 'Senryū' verses, for example, were almost completely humorous and did not attempt to be serious poetry.²⁰² At times Issa's verses seem to become virtually 'senryū', wit for wit's sake. Two important influences saved him from becoming a merely humorous poet. One was the fact that he never created verses simply to amuse.²⁰³ He always remained a serious poet who used humor, wit, sarcasm and cynicism as methods of enhancing, in verse, the vividness of the realities around him and his feelings about those realities.²⁰⁴

The other important influence which constantly worked to keep his verses from degenerating into purely vulgar or comic verse was his continual admiration for and efforts at poetry in the Tenmei style.²⁰⁵ His mature style became a combination of both the common and the

elegant. At times they were blended together, at times they were used in contrast, and some of his verses utilized one of the two concepts, the common and the elegant, and became clear examples of either. As the development of Issa's style is traced, it becomes clear that the Tenmei style had both a lasting and profound effect upon him.

(v). Issa and Ōemaru.

While on his journey to western Japan, among the many poets that Issa met was ²⁰⁶Ōemaru of Osaka. Ōemaru's work was renowned for its unconventional light-hearted wit and humour. ²⁰⁷Issa was attracted to this man's style and sought to produce verses in it. Some of Issa's verses of this period were imitations of Ōemaru's poetry. For example compare poem ref. 1.61. with;

Chigiriki na katami ni shibuki kaki futatsu.²⁰⁸

Nuptial vows

And for momentoes

Astringent persimmons

Two. Ōemaru.

Or the following two poems;

Yūdachi ya edo wa kasa uri ashida uri.²⁰⁹

Evening downpour,

In Edo the umbrella seller,

The rain-clog seller. Issa.

Iku haru no machi ya kasa uri sudare uri.²¹⁰

Rains of passing spring

And in the town

The umbrella seller

The bamboo screen seller. Ōemaru.

Ōemaru's style is close to the Danrin²¹⁰ style that preceded Bashō. It was a reaction against the strict conventions²¹¹ and moralistic attitude of the Teimon style, which was the forerunner of all haiku verse. Its leaders refused to be bound in any way to the subjects and vocabulary of the classics. It depended very much upon clever word usage, wit, and parody on the old classics.²¹² Issa had imbibed the Danrin spirit while training in the Katsushika school²¹³ and his interest in this style was further stimulated by contacts with poets like Ōemaru. Among Issa's verses in this style, which are parodies of poems in classical collections, are poems ref. 1.35, 1.56, 1.75.

The parody on the old classics is lost, however, in translation. For example, the verse ref. 1.35. contains the phrase;

ide soyo

This adjectival phrase is taken from a verse in the Goshūishū.²¹⁴ In the classical verse the breeze comes from Mount Arima in present Hyōgō prefecture and is so pleasant that it even causes the poet to forget the one he loves. Issa changes the mountain to Inaba in present Gifu, inserts the classical phrase and the result is a light parody of the classical verse. This kind of light hearted parody was the source of much humor in the work of Ōemaru and poets like him.

(vi). Issa, Poet of Many Styles.

In his early days as a poet Issa was exposed to a great variety of poets and styles of haiku poetry. This was particularly true during the period of his journey into western Japan. His poetry of this period reflects this experience. As we have seen, he attempted verses in styles as far apart as Tenmei and Danrin. He also met poets of styles representing the various types of verse between these two extremes. As a poet he was influenced by all he met and experienced. The sheer volume of his work in subsequent years is evidence itself that Issa was to remain a poet of many styles all his life.²¹⁵ These early influences were to remain with him.

Indeed, to survive as a poet, it was important for him to be able to be at ease in the company of poets of many different tastes and styles. Issa was never to know the luxury of having disciples come to him with gifts of money and kind in return for his instruction as a poet until he settled in Kashiwabara. In Edo he was never recognised as a master poet, and in his travels he had to adapt himself to the tastes of others. To maintain the company of other poets he needed to be able to take part in linked verse, a pursuit that depended much upon knowledge of, and ability in, conventional haiku composition. Issa noted down examples of linked haiku verse by others to aid his own attempts at this poetic exercise and pastime.²¹⁶

In any study of Issa it should not be overlooked that competence in linked haiku verse and the ability to

work as a 'marker' for Somaru, would have largely depended upon Issa's knowledge of, and ability in, conventional haiku verse. These skills, therefore, were a necessary means of financial support for Issa.

This is one major reason why Issa's poetry did not degenerate into the purely comic style of low Danrin haiku or senryu verse, or become exclusively dedicated to the refined and elegant Tenmei style. For very practical reasons Issa was not to know the luxury of a choice of style, and in consequence two distinct traits can be found in his work from beginning to end. The conventional and classical element was necessary for his "bread and butter", for there was no hope of wide contact with many poets without it, and without such contact with poets who had the means to offer Issa the necessities of life, it is doubtful indeed, whether he could have survived as a poet. His patrons were mainly rich and successful merchants or Buddhist priests, the kind of men whose livelihood did not depend upon their poetry. It was these men, and the recognised masters to whom disciples came, who could afford the luxury of specialization in their art, but not Issa.

It is quite reasonable, therefore, that many of the major traits of Issa's mature and unique style are not evident in any clarity during these early years. In particular, there is very little subjective element in his work during the Kansei period. Poetry of a marked subjective nature would not be popular in linked verse, and would not be acceptable to a serious poet.

However, this is not to say that certain traits, which were to become distinct characteristics in his later work, are entirely absent from his work of this period. We will now seek to discover some early indications of his later unique style among his work during the Kansei period.

(vii). First Signs of Issa's Distinctive Style.

(i). The Projection of His Personal Feelings into His Work.

The Kansei Kiko ends with a peaceful pastoral verse, ref. 1.13. We have here a pastoral setting for a family reunion at which Issa can hardly contain his emotions. All seems well, even his step-mother is included in the expression of joy at seeing the faces of his family again, and yet, in some of the poems in this diary one senses that he has not forgotten or forgiven the pain of the past and his enmity towards his step-mother, and that his true feelings are not those of unsullied transparent joy.

It is suggested that the pastoral scene depicted at the end of this diary is written in response to literary imitation of other famous diaries rather than out of the reality of his true feelings, and that his true feelings are hinted at in the following verses, which are more in keeping with later references to his step-mother in his work.²¹⁷ For example, verse ref. 1.4 contains the

phrase 'thorny briar', a phrase he later used for his home town in general and his step-mother in particular.²¹⁸

Another verse in the Kansei Sannen Kiko reads;

Waregane mo kyō bakari tote kasumu kana.²¹⁹

The cracked bell, too

Rings out, "Just for today",

Among the mists.

While yet another is as follows;

Ao ume ni te o kakete neru kawazu kana.²²⁰

With one foot resting

On the unripe plum,

A frog asleep.

The verse ref. 1.7 contains the phrase;

"How harmonious they seem alongside each other now".

These verses personify both bell and frog and display both comic wit and a slightly cynical view of things; these are components of Issa's later style, and if they are indeed reflections of the state of his feelings about meeting his step-mother again, they are true to everything else he ever wrote about her.

In all likelihood we have here some early examples of how Issa's feelings projected themselves into his work, not to the enhancement of our understanding of the subjects of his poetry, but rather as his feelings expressed within his poetry to the extent that the subjects themselves are used as vehicles to express his feelings. Hence the bell is cracked, the plum is sour, the thorny briar is creeping where it should not be, and only the gravestones of two past antagonists co-exist harmoniously.

(ii). Issa's Self Depreciation and Sense of Unworthiness.

In verse ref. 1.25 Issa compares himself to a fly or mosquito. This verse is clearly subjective and contains a strong element of self depreciation. These are traits often found in his mature work. Other verses in this strain are those ref. 1.53 and 1.74, in which he depicts himself as being blown back from the provincial barrier by the wind, and alone on the open road doing his sewing. The second verse lacks the force of the first but they are basically in the same vein. Issa is talking about himself and his hardships..

A sense of unworthiness and guilt are conveyed in verse ref. 1.126 where Issa is taking a noon nap while he can hear the rice-planting songs sung by others labouring in the fields. This verse is the forerunner of many verses in which Issa shows a strong consciousness of the fact that, though of farming background, he never tilled the land all during his adult life. This type of verse culminates with the following poem written when he was sixty two years of age;

Hana no kage nemaji mirai ga osoroshiki.²²¹

In the shade of the blossoms,

I cannot sleep

For the future

Is too fearful!

Issa wrote this verse after considering his life, one in which he had worn clothes, the yarn of which he had never spun, and eaten rice, in the cultivation of which

he had never participated. In this verse Issa implies that because he had thus lived, some awful retribution was bound to fall upon him. The phrase hana no kage is translated here in its literal sense as 'in the shade of the blossoms', but this phrase is also used as a metaphor for a life of ease or idleness. Issa seems to use it in this way. Issa bore this sense of worthlessness and guilt all his life and it intensified as he got older.

Issa is sometimes called a 'farmer poet' and has been described as 'having remained a farmer all his life'. These statements are misleading. Though born and brought up in an agricultural community as the son of a working farmer, apart from any help he gave his parents before the age of fourteen, Issa, never in his life farmed the soil. In the eyes of the farmer Issa was a wastrel, and of this he was very conscious. If he had become a successful or renowned poet like Bashō, no doubt he would have received some respect even in his own village, but Issa did not succeed. His life was one consisting of times of acute poverty and on occasion he was almost reduced to what in fact was very close to begging.²²²

To the hardworking conscientious farmer Issa's existence was that of a parasite.^{222a} Issa's sense of shame and guilt was not simply the result of his farming background, but this background always remained one of the major causes of it, and his tendency towards self depreciation and denigration, which he carried with him from the very beginning of his life as a poet.

As he neared his old home town for the first time since

he left it at the age of fourteen, he wrote in the Kansei Sannen Kikō the verse ref. 1.12. Here again, is an early indication that Issa was keenly aware that it was others who toiled in the fields. This particular verse is the earliest that we have of his poems which have as their subject ~~not~~ nature but work. From the very beginning Issa showed signs that he was going to shift the emphasis of his work from the conventional poetic view of nature and life, to the hard and practical world of the ordinary man and everyday life.

(iii). Issa and the Poor and Ordinary Man.

There are verses written by Issa in this period which indicate his already keen powers of observation of the everyday life of the ordinary man in general and the poor man and the beggar in particular. Issa was later to call himself 'the chief of beggars'^{222b}. It has already been noted how he compared himself to a monk 'no more than a fly or a mosquito', and in this period, too, a number of verses depict beggars, e.g. verses ref. 1.54, 1.55 and 1.106. In each of these verses the beggar is looked upon with sympathy and it is very likely that a considerable subjective element is present in these verses, too.

In verses ref. 1.50 1.59, 1.67, 1.85, 1.95 and 1.100 Issa turns his gaze upon the old man warming himself, the beggar living under the bridge, the mother working on into the night, the blind masseur, the poor servant, and the house of the poor smitten with small-pox. Such poems are not numerous during this early period and they

lack the power and force of his later verses since they are largely descriptive, but his sympathy for, and empathy with, the poorest, is clearly discernable.

Verse ref. 1.85 is a very good example of this aspect of Issa's style displayed at an early stage in his life as a poet. It is neither classical nor conventional in its style. It is neither humorous nor pastoral. It contains no parody or allusion. It would not be possible to use it in a linked verse sequence. It seems, at first glance, to be a simple observation of the life of a blind travelling masseur, put into haiku form, but it is more than that. The subject of the poem is not the snow, or the eerie piercing sound of the masseur's flute echoing through the falling snow, although that is part of the picture described in the verse, rather, it is the very hardship that the masseur must undergo to make a living, a living at times little better than that of a beggar. In Edo times there was little else that a blind man could do but become a masseur. The poem is about the harsh reality of the man's life, and Issa's sympathy almost certainly comes from his own experience as an Edo labourer and the poverty of his own life as an aspiring poet. It contains a subjective element, it is not merely an objective observation of the life of another. It is an expression of identification with the blind masseur in a life of hardship, a life that was probably little different to that of Issa's own, in that Issa scraped a living with the 'tip of his tongue', while the masseur did so with the tips of his fingers.

This identification with, and description of, the lives of

the poor and unfortunate, and the ordinary person in everyday life develops into one of the unique themes of Issa's poetry.

(iv). Humour in Issa's Work.

Humour was later to become another of Issa's major characteristics as a poet, but it is scarce in the verses of this period. Only a small number of verses in a humorous vein can be found, including poems ref. 1.17, 1.23, 1.38 and 1.123. The last three of these verses are comic and vulgar, but little else.

Poem ref. 1.17 however, though one of the first we have of Issa's very early poems, is among the rare verses of this period which are close to Issa's later style. This poem contains not only comic humour but also expresses that hint of cynicism and touch of irony which were to pervade much of Issa's life and work. For Issa, while others viewed the blossoms through the telescope for their pennies, the mist would fall at his turn and the coins would be wasted. This kind of experience, so true in the experience of all men from time to time, was to dog Issa in a measure unknown to most. Often he was to meet these experiences with out bursts of cynicism and sarcasm, and this particular verse, though lacking the power and sting of many which were to follow, is certainly their prototype. It is also the first of many verse to reveal a cynical money-mindedness, although this is the only verse in this vein in this period.

(v). The Themes of Cold and Loneliness.

The themes of cold and loneliness were later to be very evident in Issa's work but in this period only a faint glimpse is caught of what was to emerge in his future work. These themes are not entirely absent at this time, as poems ref. 1.45, 1.74, 1.94 and 1.128 reveal, but these are but mere shadows of what are to follow.

As Issa grew older the sense of his own loneliness intensified and his poetry on this theme became an anguished cry. His deep feeling of loneliness was increased by the fact that for many years of his life he had no real home to which to return. The enmity between him and his step-mother, and their bitter quarrel after the death of Issa's father resulted in Issa having no place at all where he could truly feel at home.

To the Japanese, even today, a place to belong is of utmost importance in both a personal and social sense.²²³ It is quite likely that the major reason why Issa never married until he had turned fifty years of age was because he was perpetually wandering and never really belonged anywhere. No go-between, even from among his friends, would have undertaken the task of arranging a marriage for someone of his unsettled existence. Not once in the first fifty years of his life did anyone, apart from his father, show any concern for his single state.

This longing for a place to call his own grew stronger as the years passed by and was expressed in an increasing number of verses depicting his longing for his own home

town, in spite of the difficulties awaiting him there. Even in this early period can be found the verse ref. 1.87, in which he saw his own home town through tears in his first dream of the New Year.

(vi). Issa and Children.

Another distinctive and major characteristic of Issa's poetry was his depiction of children. Such verses, though few in number, can be found in this early period, for example, verses ref. 1.41, 1.58, and 1.72.

Issa was to become a keen observer of children, of whom he was very fond, reflecting his own personal loneliness as a child, and his lack of home and family life as an adult for many years.

Such verses also express his sympathy for the small and weak, as for example poem ref. 1.41 in which Issa's attention is focussed upon the loser. It was to the underdog that Issa's gaze would increasingly turn. Until Issa's time, poetry about children was uncommon in Japan.²²⁴

(vii). Issa and Small and Weak Creatures.

Verses in which the subject is an insect or small animal are common to all haiku poets since insects and small animals are often used as seasonal indications, and haiku are expected to contain a word or phrase which clearly indicates the season of the year in which it was composed or to which it refers.²²⁵

In Issa's later verses he used insects and small animals as far more than mere indicators of the time of the year, and as previously noted, he compared himself with the fly and the mosquito. His verses about small animals and

insects increased as he grew older, eventually numbering several hundreds, and his view of them became quite different from that of the conventional poet.

Even though during the Kansei period most of the verses he wrote, which included insects and small animals, are in the conventional form, there are just a few which give a glimpse of how his verses on this theme were to develop. Verses ref. 1.111, and 1.112 are typical of the many poems that Issa was later to compose in his simple and artless style, a style easily understood and loved by the child-²²⁶ of Japan today.

The verse ref. 1.123 is a forerunner of many in which the insect becomes, not just the object of the verse, but also Issa's conversational partner. Issa's fondness for insects and small animals was not simply a love for all living things arising from his farming or Buddhist background, or mere empathy with their smallness, weakness and unimportance. Issa's verses about, and addressed to, insects and small animals are also an expression of his loneliness. The haiku art is best appreciated in the company of others, the verses need a partner to share in them. Linked verse was just as much a social event as it was a poetic exercise. In his loneliness Issa made the insects and small animals his partners in verse. He not only spoke to them through his poetry, but at a later stage of his poetry he also put words into their mouths, through which he expressed his own feelings.

Issa was later to show affection for even the meanest of insects and verse ref. 1.57 gives another hint as to

why this was so. We should picture Issa dousing himself with hot water prior to entering the bathtub after having slept in the open, possibly for nights on end. He must rid himself of the lice before he gets into the tub because, in the Japanese fashion, others will use the same hot water. The word *tsumi* in this verse is used as a pun, it can mean either 'squeeze' or 'sin'. When Issa wrote this verse he used the Chinese character for sin 罪, which here is associated with the taking of life. However, anyone hearing the haiku read would understand either or both meanings of the word. In this verse Issa's fondness for all living creatures is based upon his religious awareness of the value of life.

(viii). Issa and Religion in the Kansei Period.

When considering the life and work of Issa his religious background must not be ignored. Like most Japanese of his time Issa was considerably influenced by his religion. He was brought up as a member of the Jōdō Shinshū, or Pure Land, sect of Amida Buddhism.²²⁷ According to one classification, Buddhism in Japan two separate groups are discernable, those based on tariki and those based on jiriki. Tariki, a word comprising of the two Chinese characters for 'other' 他 and 'strength' 力, can be literally translated as 'the strength of another'. Jiriki is composed of the characters for 'self' 自, and 'strength' 力, and can be translated as 'one's own strength'. Jōdō Shinshū is the ultimate expression of the former, while Zen Buddhism is very much an expression of the latter.²²⁸

Whereas Zen Buddhism stresses self discipline, meditation and effort on the path to enlightenment, Jōdō Shinshū teaches salvation by faith alone, i.e. faith in the power of another to give salvation. The founder of the Jōdō Shinshū sect, the priest Shinran,²²⁹ based it upon the following texts from Buddhist scriptures;

"Though I attain Buddhahood I shall never be complete until all people everywhere, hearing my name, gain right ideas about life and death, and gain that perfect wisdom that will keep their minds pure and tranquil in the midst of this world's greed and suffering.....

Thus I make these my vows; may I not attain Buddhahood until they are fulfilled.....

Thus He, by accumulating innumerable virtues through many eons of time, became Amida, or The Buddha of Light and Boundless Life, and perfected His own

Buddhaland or Purity...

Whoever hears this Buddha's name, magnifies and receives it with joy, his mind becomes one with the Buddha's mind and he will be born in the wondrous Land of Purity".²³⁰

This teaching resulted in the belief that merely to call upon the name of Amida Buddha in faith was all that was needed for salvation in the afterlife. The repetition of the name of Amida would result in rebirth in the Pure Land through His merit.²³¹

One of the major differences between Bashō and Issa is the fact that they adhered to these quite different Buddhist sects. Even the volume of their work can be partly explained by this reason. Bashō's verses are carefully prepared, meditated upon and have great depth.²³² Issa's are often spontaneous outbursts in response to what he saw and felt.²³³ Issa's verses are easily understood and many of them were apparently composed quite effortlessly. The method of composition and content of the

poetry of both Bashō and Issa was affected by the different types of Buddhism to which they adhered, and the different attitudes towards life and the world that their religious faith bred in them.

Issa's religious attitude made it possible for him to be relatively flippant about religious exercises and objects.²³⁴ He was markedly irreverent at times, but we do not find such verses among his poetry of this period.

In the Kansei period Issa's verses of a religious nature are not outstanding. As a Buddhist, and like most of the general populace, Issa had an inherent awareness of the impermanence of life. His Buddhist upbringing would have instilled within him this sense of the impermanence of life, but his adverse circumstances and the unstable nature of his everyday life, particularly directly after the end of this period, seems to have impressed such sentiments more deeply upon his heart and mind, and his inner struggle and anguish, in the religious sense began to reveal itself in his poetry,²³⁵ e.g. 1.39, 1.71, 1.110.

In this period, however, only in verse ref. 1.16 do we catch a glimpse of the religious pessimism which was to creep into some of his poems.

(ix). Issa the Patriot.

Throughout his life Issa used the phrase kimi ga yo as the opening line of many of his verses. When he did so it was almost invariably to versify a thought in praise of Japan. Even in the Kansei period many instances of this can be found, e.g. verse ref. 1.81 referring to Japan as a land of harmony, 1.83 praising Japan for its

attractiveness to the Chinese, and 1.129 noting that even the beggar's house is gaining prosperity.

Issa was obviously very conscious of being Japanese. No doubt he was influenced by the 'National Learning' movement in this matter, but it was also true that he was very aware from early on in his wandering life that it was the peace and prosperity of Japan under the Tokugawa shogunate that made a life like his a possibility. It seems strange that Issa, who often used sarcasm and cynicism in his work, who displayed anger at his circumstances and surroundings in life, and who sided with the weak and the poor, never made the country of Japan or its central rulers, the object of his scorn.

Kimi ga yo is the name, and part of Japan's national anthem and whenever Issa used it, it was in a patriotic way. He carried this spirit of praise for his country with him until his death.

Conclusion.

The majority of Issa's poems of this period were attempts to imitate the styles of others, which he was gradually assimilating and absorbing. He wrote comparatively little original creative poetry and the signs of his later distinctive style had not yet become clearly evident. This was mainly a period of preparation, the foundation was being laid for the future development of his poetry.

NOTES ON CHAPTER TWO. Section 1.

1. E.g. Ito and Maruyama.
2. Japanese Court Poetry, by Brower and Miner, Stanford Univ. Press. 1961. p.187-198, and 361-362.
3. The Year of My Life, by Nobuyuki Yuasa, Univ. of California Press. 1960. p.25-27.
4. Comp.Works vol.5 p.117
5. Ibid. p.117.
6. The phrase 'the sun was setting over the waters to the west' is based upon an identical phrase in Bashō's work Oku no Hosomichi. See Comp.Works vol.5 p.117.
7. Saigyō (1118-1190): one of Japan's most famous classical poets.
8. The phrase 'the insects that live among the duckweed grieve...' is taken from the Kokinshū. Comp. Works vol.5 p.117.
9. Comp.Works vol.5 p.14.
10. Ibid. p.14.
11. Musashino: one of the 15 provinces of the Tōkaidō. Now part of Tōkyō metropolitan prefecture.
12. The new house built by Issa's acquaintance Nizaemon.
13. Nizaemon is possibly the poet Basen, a disciple of Somaru. See Kobayashi Issa to Shimosa no Haijintachi by Tokuzō Sugiya, Gyōin Shokan 1981. p.46.
14. One of the major rivers of the Kantō plain.
- 14a. Japan's highest and most famous mountain.
- 14b. A famous mountain of the Kantō area in central Ibaragi prefecture.
15. The phrase 'there is not one fault in anything...' is based upon a similar one in Bashō's work the Genjūanki. Comp.Works vol.5. p.25.
16. The phrase used to describe the ship upon the waves is taken from the Manyōshū. Comp.Works. vol.5 p.25.
17. Here Issa is alluding to Bashō's work Oi no Kobumi. Comp.Works vol.5 p.25.
18. Here Issa is alluding to a phrase in Bashō's work the Genjūanki. Comp.Works vol.5 p.26.

19. shirami, a pun on the word shiromi, alluding to the whiteness of the lotus flower. Shirami is Japanese for 'lice'.
20. The whole verse is based upon a situation in the Genjūanki. Comp.Works vol.5 p.26.
21. Gyoyaku: on the east bank of the Edo river. Now part of Ichikawa town in Chiba prefecture.
22. Nakagawa; a provincial barrier set up on the river bank, which women were forbidden to pass.
23. Mōshu: a character from Chinese literature. He contrived to have a provincial barrier opened early by having one of his men skillfully imitate the cock crowing in the morning. Comp.Works vol.5 p.26.
24. 'the man at the bay' is an allusion to Chinese literature. Helping a warrior to escape, a boatman decapitated himself to draw attention from the fleeing noble. Comp.Works vol.5 p.26.
25. A disciple of Chikua.
26. The word Yujima is not included in the text but is included in the translation to help the sense. Yujima is added as a footnote in Comp.Works.
27. Hongo: now part Tōkyō city, Bunkyo district.
28. The expression Issa uses for 'the journey that lay before me' is taken from Bashō's work Oku no Hosomichi. Comp.Works vol. 5 p.26.
29. Toda; now part of Saitama prefecture.
30. Warabi; a post town on the Nakasendō highway.
31. Issa is here alluding to a phrase in Bashō's work Oku no Hosomichi. Comp.Works vol.5 p.26.
32. The expression used for 'rain from the darkened skies' is taken from the Kaidōki. Comp.Works vol.5 p.26.
33. Urawa: now a city in Saitama prefecture.
34. In Issa's text he uses 'Tsukiyomi no Miya. He seems to have made a slip of the pen. Tsukinomiya is the largest shrine in Urawa.
35. Ōmiya: now a city in Saitama prefecture.
36. Musashino: now part of metropolitan Tōkyō.
37. The phrase 'reluctantly worshipped from afar' alludes

to a phrase in Bashō's work the Oku no Hosomichi.
Comp.Works vol.5 p.26.

38. The translation has been expanded to include the phrase 'described in the Ganjūan Records' to add meaning to the English rendering.
39. Kakagawa: town in Saitama prefecture.
40. Gensei Miura: Poet, pen name Mukyū, a physician by profession.
41. Jiro Naozane: Genji warrior, he reluctantly killed the youth Atsumori of the rival Heike clan. Atsumori reminded him of his own son who had been wounded in battle. He was about to spare Atsumori when other Genji warriors arrived on the scene, so he killed the boy. This took place at the battle of Ichi no Tani and is described on p. 156-158 of The Ten Foot Square Hut and The Tales of Heike, trans. A.L. Sadler, Tuttle Press. 1972.
42. Atsumori: the eighteen year old son of the Heike leader Tsunemori.
43. The year Angen: 1175.
44. Issa here alludes to the Kaidōki. Comp.Works vol.5 p.27.
45. 'the thunderous clouds, their power echoed..' is an allusion to the Kaidōki. Comp.Works vol.5 p.27.
46. Genpei Wars: the battles between the Genji and the Heike, fought in the 12th century.
47. 'above the clouds' is an expression used to describe the elegant life of nobles at the imperial court.
48. Atsumori was an accomplished flutist. He had with him his famous flute when he was struck down in battle.
49. Suma: Town in modern Hyōgō prefecture, just west of Kōbe and facing towards Ōsaka bay. A place of great natural beauty and was also a battle site during the Genpei Wars.
50. 'the chirping of the grasshoppers', an allusion to a phrase in the Kaidōki. Comp.Works vol.5 p.27.
51. 'predetermined destinies', as above.
52. Fukaku: Edo haiku poet. Founder of the Kechōtai style,

- which is characterized by quick wittedness and eccentricity. Fukaku died in 1753 aged ninety one.
53. Higashigata village: now part of Fukaya town in Saitama prefecture.
 54. Now part of Fukaya town.
 55. Sessha: Haiku poet of Sakai town near Ōsaka.
 56. Isezaki: town in Gunma prefecture.
 57. Issa is alluding here to a phrase in the Kaidōki. Comp.Works vol.5 p.27.
 58. The 'little boat out upon the waves' is an allusion to a poem in the Kokinshū. Comp.Works vol.5 p.28.
 59. 'spark never returns to the stone' is an allusion to a phrase in the Chinese classic Shinron. Comp.Works vol.5 p.28.
 60. 'water that never retraces its course' Issa is alluding to a verse in the Kokinshū. Comp.Works vol.5 p.28.
 61. Issa is here again alluding to the Kaidōki.
 62. 'an act of destiny itself' the phrase alludes to a similar one in the Kaidōki. Comp.Works vol.5 p.28.
 63. This sentence alludes to one in the Inatsuma Hyōshi, a sensationalistic novel by Kyōden, a popular novelist of Issa's time. Comp.Works vol.5 p.28.
 64. Buddhists are given posthumous names.
 65. The phrase Issa uses here 'The traveller who makes the road his home' is used by Bashō in Oku no Hosomichi. Comp.Works vol.5 p.28
 66. 'Could it be that I myself was actually dead too' is alluding to a phrase in the Inatsuma Hyōshi. Comp.Works vol.5 p.28.
 67. The fox and the badger are prominent in Japanese fairytales in which they often change into human form.
 68. Issa here is referring to the novels of the day of which Inatsuma Hyōshi was typical, and in the same breath is denying that his story is based on them. Comp.Works vol.5 p.28.

69. Murakami Yoshiakiyo: Lord of the Kuzuo district of Shinano (1501-1573). For many years a warrior in the Shinano and Echizen regions.
70. Yashiro: now part of Koshoku town in Nagano pref.
71. Chikuma river; in actual fact this was the Sai river. Comp.Works vol.5 p.31.
72. 'The waters seemed to stretch.....' is a phrase which occurs in the Tōzeki Kikō. Comp.Works vol.5 p.31.
73. This verse is found in the Fugashū, a classical collection of the 14th century compiled in 1346. Comp.Works vol.5 p.31.
74. Koichi: now part of Nagano city.
75. Issa's verse is based on the one previously quoted from the Fugashū.
76. Pure Land : The Zenkō temple is the main temple of the Jōdō Shinshū in Shinano. 'PureLand' is the Buddhist heaven as conceived of in this sect.
77. An allusion to the Kaidōki. Comp.Works vol.5 p.31.
78. An allusion to the Inatsuma Hyōshi. Ibid.
79. An allusion to the Kaidōki. ibid.
80. 'driftwood upon the open sea.....' a reference to the Chinese work Nehankyō. Comp.Works vol.5 p.32.
81. Issa alludes to the Buddhist story collection Takaramonoshū. Comp.Works vol.5 p.32.
82. matsu, a pun, the word means both 'to wait' and 'pine tree'.
83. The verse is based upon one of Bashō's in the Genjūanki. Comp.Works vol.5 p.32.
84. The whole introduction is taken from Comp.Works vol.2 p.5-6
85. The phrase matsutake no yukiai is taken from a poem in the Shinkokinshū. Comp.Works vol.2 p.50.
86. This poem was composed at a place called Hakujitsu, in Edo. It was a place of both worship and excursion. Among the diversions there was telescope that could be rented for three mon (a small copper coin). Being a high place, the famous cherry blossoms of Ueno and

Asakusa could be seen on a clear day. Comp.Works vol.2 p.50.

87. shiranu hi is a pillow word for Kyūshū. It is therefore used as a pun in this verse. Ibid. p51.
88. 1.17 is one of Issa's parting verses, addressed to those who bade him farewell from Edo.
89. Another parting verse. The newly shaven head was part of his preparation for the journey.
90. This verse is based on a poem by Buson. Comp.Works vol.2 p.52.
91. This verse was written at one of the provincial barriers that were erected on the main routes between one daimyō domain and another. They were used as check points to police and sometimes tax, the traveller. Ibid p.52.
92. Kiyomigata: a place of great natural beauty on the coast near Shimizu town in Shizuoka prefecture.
93. Miho: A place of great natural beauty just south-east of Shimizu town.
94. The first words of this poem allude to one by Bashō in Oku no Hosomichi. Comp.Works vol.2 p.53.
95. Akasaka: one of the 53 post towns on the Tōkaidō highway, the main thoroughfare on the eastern coast of Japan.
96. Okazaki: a post town on the Tōkaidō highway.
97. This poem is based on a similar one by Buson. Comp. Works vol.2 p.53.
98. Tadasu is a place name, a wooded area which makes up part of the grounds of the Kamo Shrine in Kyōto.
99. Tōji: a temple of the Shingon sect, in Kyōto.
100. Shinmachi: district of Ōsaka, one of the city's famous 'gay quarters' renowned for its brothels.
101. The poem alludes to a similar one in the Goshūishū. Complete Works vol.2 p.53.
102. Matsuhogata: place name for the northern tip of Awaji Island. It is used here as a pillow word.
103. One should imagine the ferryboat at night, possibly

- waiting at the pier. The ferryman relieves himself in the river disturbing the reflection of the moon.
104. Issa is possibly referring to the ruins of the palace of the 47th. emperor who moved the the court to Awaji Island. Comp.Works vol.2 p.54.
105. Awaji Island is one of the battle sites where the Heike were defeated by the Genji during the Genpei Wars. Many Heike warriors died among the waves and since then a certain kind of crab, common to these parts, which has a mask-like pattern on its shell, has been known as the Heike crab. It was believed that the spirits of the dead warriors became crabs of this kind. Comp.Works vol.2 p.54.
106. Issa uses a phrase here that is taken from a poem in the Manyōshū. Comp.Works vol. 2 p.57.
107. The word tsumi here is a pun. Issa uses the Chinese character for the word 'sin', but phonetically it also means 'to squeeze'. Both meanings are translated. The taking of any form of life was considered sinful to a Buddhist.
108. Issa uses a phrase here taken from a poem in the Goshūishū. Comp.Works vol.2 p.58.
109. Servants in Issa's time had but two or three days holiday in the year. These days were known as yabu-iri. Though married, or at least promised to each other, servants working in different employ could hardly meet but on these days.
110. Tamaboko is a pillow word pertaining to michi, and has no translatable meaning.
111. This verse was almost certainly written in Nagasaki where the Roman Catholic Church had prospered in the past but which was strictly proscribed in Issa's time. This verse is his response to seeing a crucifix (yasobotoko can be translated as 'the Christians' Buddha') on Dejima Island, where the Dutch were confined to their trading post.
112. The tamadana is a small Buddhist altar placed upon a shelf on the wall of a room in the house at the time of the Buddhist festival of All Souls (Bon), a

time at which the spirits of the departed are believed to return to earth for four days. The spirits are believed to use this temporary altar as their dwelling place. Issa's verse has a twofold meaning. The first, and obvious meaning, is that he, too, is a temporary guest in the house. The second meaning is that his own body is but a temporary dwelling place for his soul in this life.

113. Aso: a famous mountain in Kyūshū in the province of Higo, now Kumamoto prefecture.
114. Ise: Ise shrine is the foremost shrine of the Shinto faith. Ise is in present day Mie prefecture. Temples are the places of worship for Buddhists. Issa is referring to the harmony between the two religions.
115. The blind masseur advertized his presence by blowing on a high pitched flute.
116. Naruto: the name of a narrow strip of sea between the western tip of Awaji Island and the north-east tip of Tokushima prefecture Shikoku Island. It is famous for the whirlpools formed there at the change of the tide.
117. Iyo: province on Shikoku Island, now Ehime prefecture.
118. A woman is fanning herself in the summer heat while near some morning glory flowers, which were, in Edo times, emblems of the poor.
119. Comp.Works vol.5. p.34.
120. Ibid. p.43-59.
121. This verse was written while Issa was staying in the home of the poet Goume in Kannonji in Kagawa province. Issa was treated very kindly by this man.
122. In the text the word kojiki is written kojjiki, an uncommon version of the word, probably written thus in order to make up the correct number of syllables.
123. This verse is in the tanka metre. The tanka was a short poem written in 31 syllables in 5 lines of 5,7,5,7,7.
124. Written in the home of a poet-priest.
125. The leader of the local children is about to climb a tree in order to steal unripe plums.

126. At the end of spring and beginning of summer, when when heavy garments are put away and lighter garments worn.
127. Fuwa no seki: A provincial barrier and guard post close to the famous battlefield of Seki ga Hara.
This barrier is popular in Japanese poetry because the place name Fuwa can be used as a pun for 'indestructable' and yet it has been the scene of many deaths.
128. The opening phrase of this verse alludes to a poem in the Kokinshū. Comp.Works vol.5 p.67.
129. Another reference to the Heike crab.
130. Kusonoki: Kusonoki Masashige (1294-1336), a famous warrior. Celebrated in Japanese history as a scholar, soldier, and model of loyalty. He fought on the side of emperor Go-Daigo against the bakufu forces in the 14th. century.
131. Maruyama p.42.
132. Ito p.50-51.
133. Manyōshū: Japan's first and greatest collection of classical poetry. Compiled in the 8th. century and contains 4,516 poems.
134. Kokinshū: classical collection of poetry, 10th. century, 1,111 poems.
135. Shinkokinshū: classical collection of poetry, 12th. century, 1981 poems.
136. Ise Monogatari: collection of poetry with prose passages giving background to each verse. Written by the nobleman Ariwara no Narihira (823-880).
137. World Within Walls, Keene, Tuttle Press 1976. p.359-360.
138. The Japanese, by E.O.Reischauer, Tuttle Press 1978. p.73-74.
139. Keene p.320-330.
140. Comp.Works vol.7 p.249-290. Esp.p.288.
141. Ibid. p.371-388.
142. On the assumption that Kansei Sannen Kikō was not written in any finalized form until much later than the events recorded in it.

143. Comp.Works vol.7 p.471-571.
144. Ujishūi Monogatari: collection of assorted tales which include Bhuddhist moral tales, humorous anecdotes, and fairy stories. Date unknown, but thought to be early 13th century.
145. Shūishū: collection of classical poetry, 10th. century, 1,351 verses.
146. Comp.Works vol.7 p.427-448.
147. Tosa Nikki: travel diary of the 10th.century describing a journey from Tosa province to Kyōto.
148. Comp. Works vol.7 p.448-470.
149. Nihonshoki: Chronicle of early Japan, compiled in 720. A mixture of myth, legend and history.
150. Genji Monogatari: Written in the 11th. century by the court lady Murasaki Shikibu, this novel is the great masterpiece of Japanese literature. It is largely the biography of the court noble Prince Genji.
151. Tsurezuregusa: a collection of assorted short essays by the poet and court noble, later turned priest, Yoshida Kenkō (1283-1350). Written about 1340.
152. Comp.Works vol.7 p.450.
153. naga-uta: long poem, lines of either 5 or 7 syllables alternating. Anywhere between 7 and 149 lines to one poem. Popular in the first half of the 8th. century.
154. Comp.Works vol.5 p.36.
155. Goshūishū: Collection of classical poetry, 11th century, 1,220 verses.
156. Comp.Works vol.2 p.53.
157. Ibid.
- 158a. Fugashū: collection of classical poetry, 14th. century, 2,210 verses. 158b. Ito p.174.
- 158a. Comp.Works vol.7 p.389-426.
159. Kojiki: Chronicle of early Japan, compiled in 712, a mixture of myth, legend, and history.
160. Comp.Works vol.7 p.390.
161. Keene p.114-115. Also, Renaissance in Japan, by K.P.Kirkwood, Tuttle Press 1970. p.52.

162. Hōjōki: diary work by Kamo Chōmei (1153-1216).
Reflections of a recluse upon the troubles and calamities of his time.
163. Kaneko p.176.
164. Ibid.
165. Ibid.
166. Ibid.
167. Ibid. p.177
168. Keene p.93. Kaneko p.176-177.
169. See translation Kansei Sannen Kikō.
170. Urifu p. 16-17. Kaneko p.176.
171. Kuriyama p.12-13.
172. Buson:Issa Koten vol.32. p.351.
173. The Narrow Road to The Deep North and Other Travel Sketches, by Nobuyuki Yuasa. Penguin. p.131-132.
174. Buson:Issa Koten vol.32. p.351.
175. Kaneko p.7. and p.176.
176. See translation Kansei Sannen Kikō, Celebration of a New House.
177. Kaneko p.178. Genjūanki:Prose work written by Bashō in 1690.
178. Keene p.58.
179. Ibid.:p.76.
180. Danrin style haiku:founded by Nishiyama Sōin (1605-1682) as a reaction against the strictures of the Teimon school. Danrin haiku was characterized by wit, parody and freedom of expression. It flourished greatly in the Kyōto, Ōsaka and Edo areas during the period 1673-1681. Haiku Jiten p.218-219.
181. Teimon style haiku:founded by Matsunaga Teitoku (1561-1653), founded upon the classical poetry of Japan it was governed by rigid rules in regard to word usage and subject matter. Haiku Jiten p.237.
182. Buson:Issa,Nihon Bungakukenyūshiryō p.275.
183. Haiku Jiten p.265,
184. Buson:Issa,Kenkyūshiryō. p.269-270.
185. Ibid. p.270.
186. Ibid. p.269-270.
187. Sources of Japanese Tradition, Ed.Wm.Theodore de Bary, Columbia Univ.Press. 1964. Vol.1. p.450.

Bashō was quoting Kūkai.

188. Ibid. p.446-447.
189. Year of My Life. Yuasa, p.16.
190. Buson:Issa, Kenkyūshiryō. p.268-269.
191. In Somaru's collection Gemōshiron.
192. " " " Kasumi no Hi.
193. " " " Shūganshi.
194. " " " Wagaizumisaitanchō.
195. Kuriyama p.8.
196. Haiku Jiten p.224.
197. Buson:Issa Koten vol.32 p.256.
198. Ibid.
199. Kuriyama p.15.
200. Buson:Issa, Koten vol.32 p.280.
201. Ibid.
202. Keene p.525,531.
203. Year of My Life. p.25,27,28.
204. Ito p.277-287.
205. Maruyama p.88-89. Buson:Issa Koten vol.32 p.284.
206. Ōemaru:Ōsaka haiku poet (1721-1805).
207. Maruyama p.68.
208. Ibid.
209. Ibid.
210. Ibid.
211. Ibid.
212. Matsuo Bashō, by Makoto Ueda, Kodansha Press 1970.
p.40.
213. Maruyama p.67.
214. Ito p.172.
215. Keene p.366
216. Comp.Works vol.5 p.6-7, and 195-520.
217. Kuriyama p.11.
218. Comp.Works vol.5 p.125. Note he signs this verse
'the step-son', indicating his step-mother in the
verse.
219. Ibid. p.16.
220. Ibid. p.16.
221. Comp.Works vol.4 p.580.
222. Issa Kenkyū, by Fujimoto Jitsuya, Musashino Shōin,
1931. p.603-605.
- 222a. Kaneko p.160. 222b. E.G. Comp.Works vol.6 p.15.

223. The Japanese, by Robert Ozaki, Tuttle Press 1978.
p.202-203. Also Enshakai to Ningenkankei, by Masahara Yoshihiko, PHP Kenkyūsho 1983. p.57.
224. Ito p.87.
225. Haiku Jiten p.72, kigo.
226. See chapter 3. Issa's poems used in primary school texts.
227. Murata p.1.
228. Ibid. p.104-106.
229. Shinran: 1173-1262. Originally an evangelistic monk of the Pure Land sect of Buddhism founded by Hōnen.
After Hōnen's death Shinran founded the True Pure Land sect (Jōdō Shinshū).
230. The Teaching of Buddha, Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai, 1977.
p.207-208.
231. Jōdō Shinshū, Otani Univ. 1961. p.28-29, 78-79.
232. Bashō to Issa, by Ogiwara Seisensui, Shunjūsha Press, 1916. p.155, 159. Also Kaneko p.179.
233. Kaneko p.179.
234. Ito p.59-62. Also Year of My Life p.5.
235. Ito p.181.

Section 2. THE KYŌWA PERIOD. 1801 - 1803.

Selected Translations.

(a). Chichi no Shūen Nikki.

This work was written in 1801 when Issa was thirty eight years old. It is one of his more well known diary works. Issa travelled from Edo to Kashiwabara in March of 1801 and found his father in seemingly good health. On April 23rd., however, his father was suddenly taken ill.

This diary begins with the account of his father's sudden collapse in the garden and continues through a period of twenty nine days to finish on May 21st. when his father died at the age of 68. Approximately two thirds of the complete diary is translated here.

'Chichi no Shūen Nikki' is a detailed work in which is revealed Issa's deep affection for his father and the great bitterness between Issa and his step-mother and step-brother Senroku.

Although in diary style it is a polished work which probably reached its final form some time after the original notes were taken down.¹

This work is also known by other titles such as 'Chichi no Shūen no Ki', 'Kanbyō Nikki' and 'Mitori Nikki'.²

The title 'Chichi no Shūen Nikki' is now the generally accepted one and is translated as 'The Record of My Father's Death.' It is unique among Issa's diaries in that it is nearly all prose. It contains just seven haiku verses. Unlike the prose in Issa's other diary

works, which is used to create backgrounds for haiku verses, the prose in this work is continuous rather than episodic.

Records of the final days of poetic masters written by admirers or disciples are quite common³ but this work is unique in that it is the record of the death of an ordinary man.

The content of this work is also unique in the way that those depicted in it are shown in all their ugliness and humanity. The shortcomings of Satsu and Senroku, and to a much lesser extent of Issa himself, are vividly portrayed and Issa's own feelings are laid bare. Issa clearly depicts his own stubbornness, self-denigration and stormy character. This kind of reportage is extremely rare in Japanese literature,⁴ where polite reticence is the norm at such times. Though not great literature in terms of style, this work deserves mention in the history of Japanese literature for the stark realism it displays.

This work is also valuable in that it gives information concerning the father's remorse at having sent his son to Edo while still a young boy. It also gives the reason for the father's unusual will, which would enable Issa to return and settle in Kashiwabara. Concerning the dispute between Issa and his step-mother and step-brother it should be remembered that only Issa's point of view is recorded and that this work is coloured and embellished with his own bias and opinion. The subsequent years of bitterness and estrangement between Issa and his step-mother and step brother, indicate that the basic situation was as he recorded it.

Reading these excerpts will clearly reveal, however, that Issa is invariably shown as the dutiful son while every mention of Satsu and Senroku is recorded to make them appear as the villains of the piece. It has been suggested that Issa actually produced and refined this work to use it to bolster his case in the dispute over his father's will.⁵

Selected Translation.

April 23rd.

A fine day, not a cloud in the sky. The first calls of the mountain cuckoo fill the air. I do not know exactly what happened but my father was watering the egg-plants when all of a sudden there he was lying face down on the ground, the sun on his back. I said to him, "What on earth has happened to you, what is it?" as I placed my arms around him and sat him up. Afterwards I realised that this was the beginning of the end for him.⁶ What an evil day it was, his temperature suddenly shot up and to touch his skin was like touching fire itself! I tried to get him to take some nourishment but not a spoonful could he swallow. "What can it be?" I gasped to myself. I was shocked to my very being but there was nothing I could do but to massage him.

April 24th.

Clear skies. A friend went to Chikuyō⁷s and brought back some medicine which I encouraged father to take.

April 25th.

Cloudy skies, later clearing. Father's illness gets worse day by day. This morning he could not even

take the thinnest rice gruel. All I could set my hopes on was the medicine which I fed him drop by drop. It was the only thing I could pass between his lips. All he could say in his pain and weakness was "I am so tired, I am so tired" and I felt it even more painful to be at his side and see him thus than to be in pain myself.

April 26th.

Clear skies. From the town of Nojiri the doctor Jinseki⁸ came to examine father. He said with a sense of hopelessness "The pulse is unsteady, this is a fearful fever, there is little chance of recovery, almost none at all". My heart fell and I felt like a boat that had lost its captain. I was at my wits' end and unable to do anything else I just kept encouraging him to take the medicine. I stayed the night at my father's sister's house in Nojiri.

April 27th.

Rain. A very lonely day, made lonelier by the rain. While pondering how I could ever pass this day a friend came bringing me a verse from Chikuyō;

Satsuki ame ame tote sora o kazasu kana.

"Raining again"

I shield my eyes with my hand

And look up to the skies.

Spring rains.

April 28th.

Clear skies. It being the anniversary of Shinran's⁹ death, father rose very early and purified his mouth with cold water in preparation for the chanting

of Buddhist prayers and scriptures. I tried to stop him, fearing that such activities would bring on the fever again, but he would not stop. Before the Buddhist home-altar he recited the Buddhist chants as always, but with a low, hardly audible voice. From behind he looked so weak and frail and I felt so sad to see him thus.

April 29th.

As the illness became worse, father, thinking about my loneliness and my future, explained in a painful whisper his intention to divide the lands and fields between my step-brother and me.

"First, the fields of Nakajima and the land at Kawara will belong to Senroku", he said, but Senroku would not agree to this and rebelled against our father's words. In their disagreement father and Senroku were at odds all day long and nothing further could be done.

Such disputes arise because all look at each other with greed, guile and perverseness in their eyes. What a disgrace it is, this world of men, it is full of all manner of evil, a place where sons do not care for, or even respect, their own fathers.

In the evening father's pulse rate worsened and I was fearful at being all alone to nurse him. I thought of Senroku, how, if he were not at his father's side at a time like this he would be much grieved about it afterwards if father should die, for he too, though at loggerheads with his father, is nonetheless also truly his son. So I went and got him to sleep at his father's side, too.

In the light of the oil lamp I looked at our sleeping

father's face as I cared for him through the night. He seemed to be in pain, breathing heavily, lying on his back. It hurt me to see him thus, but the tide turned and for a little while I could be somewhat at rest within my heart.

Father thought he would like to try a cure made from the liver of a bear,¹⁰ a medicine that the doctor at Nojiri had. The village of Nojiri was only a short distance away, but I had to stay near my father lest my step-mother begin to quarrel with him as she had the previous day. I was also concerned that someone be at his side to nurse him, so unknown to my father I got my younger brother to go. Just at that time the spring rains ceased. The water was above the grass in the fields and the paddy fields were also inundated and so father asked, "Where is Senroku?". Not being able to keep it from him I told him where Senroku had gone. Father was very angry with me. "Why did you not consult me?. Why have you sent him begging for that medicine?.. Do you, too, ignore me?", he asked.

From the direction of her room my step-mother, not caring who might hear her, took this opportunity to begin to scold and curse me, shouting, "You lazy scoundrel, you even sent Senroku off without any breakfast. You had no consideration for your brother's hunger at all!".

I felt so desperately alone, but there was nothing I could do, so I knelt before my father with my brow upon the floor and apologised saying, "It will not happen again", and thus sought his forgiveness for my mistake.

Father's anger gradually subsided. Whether in life or in death, the commands of one's father are the joy of a son, thus there was no need for me to think ill of my father and his wishes at this time. How pitiful it was to hear father's voice so weak even in his anger. When I think that the previous night he might have said his last farewell how happy I was to have been the object of his anger today. It made me feel like a turtle which comes across a piece of flotsam upon which to rest,¹¹ yet even more so.

The sun at last climbed high into the heavens and my brother wended his way home.

May 2nd.

A sudden change for the worse. Father is in great pain, yet my step-mother, because of the quarrel over the will does not care, or even come to see how he is. Senroku, too, since knowing of father's intention to divide the land continues to be at odds with him.

Even though he is my step-brother I cannot but feel that this wretched bitterness between us is the result of our having been enemies in a previous existence..

Father, thinking how tired I must be after having to lie awake all night said to me kindly, "Go outside and take a nap to catch up on your sleep", but because of my step-mother's attitude towards him, ready to find fault with him at the slightest excuse and constantly forgetful of the precept that a wife should obey and respect her husband,¹² I could not leave him. It is because of her dislike for me and the fact that I am constantly at his bedside that makes her so antagonistic and so full of

dissatisfaction towards father, and yet I cannot turn my back on the situation and go elsewhere.

May 3rd.

Clear skies. The doctor Jinseki declared that father's illness is beyond his power to heal. Thus, given up by the doctor in whom we placed our hopes as if he were a god, I considered trying the prayer rituals of the Shingon School¹³ of Buddhism and thus seek to gain the aid of all the gods and buddhas, but such is not allowed for us of the Pure Land sect.

There was nothing left but to wait helplessly for the end but not being able to sit there and do nothing at all I thought I would get the doctor Dōyū from Zenkōji and so I sent someone to fetch him quickly.

Father's hold on life had not yet broken and so I could only wait for the doctor to come and hope that somehow he would be able to restore father to health. Towards evening, when folks light the lamps at their gates, I saw the sedan chair approaching. The doctor alighted and asked immediately to see the patient but he simply repeated the opinion of the doctor Jinseki, that apart from some kind of a miracle, father was not going to recover. My last hope gone all I could do was to give my father sips of warm water and wait for morning.

May 4th.

Father is a different man from yesterday! His appearance is so much better. "I want something to eat" he said. My joy was boundless. Last night's medicine had taken effect and father was a new man! I made some gruel

and he took three or four full bowls. The doctor Dōyū commented, "By the looks of him I think he will certainly get well" and at that, I stayed at his bedside with a heart at ease. When doctor Dōyū departed I accompanied him as far as the village of Furuma¹⁴ to see him on his way. Rain clouds were building up both to the east and west and the sky had a strange appearance. I heard the call of a mountain cuckoo announcing that his season was here. The cuckoo had sung out before no doubt, but since my father's illness I had not been aware of it, for by day and night I had thought of nothing else but caring for my father and thus, because my heart had been full of other things I heard the cuckoo as if it had sung for the first time.

2.1. Hototogisu ware mo ki ai no yoki hi nari.

Mountain cuckoo

I, too, feel good

On this fine day.

2.2. Suzume yo to no yurushi no detari kado no tsuki.

My father gives me leave

To go outside and cool myself

And there above the gate

The moon.

Today is the one day in the year when the rice seedlings are transplanted in the paddy fields and everyone is outside, neighbours working together, hired workers and those normally at home are all out in the fields and only I am left here beside my father's bed in the house. And so it was all day long until the sunset glow upon the wall of

the room heralded the evening. As it neared the time for evening meals I moved father back into the inner room, lest those who passed by were offended by a sick man's presence..

My younger brother said to those who had been working in the fields, "It certainly would be a lot easier if the old man would just die" and such like. He kept saying that if father lived much longer he would have lived too long!

Our life together with our parents is only during our time in this world, a 'once only' relationship. Therefore we should not think it too much even if we had to nurse a sick father even for a hundred years! Even the fierce tiger would never devour its own parents and it is said that even the despised crow repays its parents by caring for them for fifty days.¹⁵ This being so, how dreadful it is that he should say such things. Father seemed even more pitiful to me so I took the lamp to him and massaged his neck, shoulders and legs.

May 5th.

The medicine seems to be the right kind for father so I encouraged him to take it frequently. I looked down upon his sleeping face now at ease and restful, as I fanned the charcoal burner and heated water for the medicine. His appearance was much improved and his pulse was steady. I was overjoyed because it seemed to me that he now had a ninety percent chance of recovery.

Looking back now I know that I only saw him through the eyes of one who was looking for good signs and nothing else.

2.3. Ashimoto e itsu kitarashi yo katatsuburi.

And when did you come

To arrive here

Right at my very feet

Mr. Snail?

May 6th.

Clear bright skies. I thought it tedious for father to be lying all day long and so I rolled up his mattress and sat him up. At this he began to recall the past and said, "When you were just three years old your mother passed away and later, just as you were beginning to grow up as a boy, your step-mother came, but you never got on well together.. Every day in your heart you suffered much and every night the fires of anger flared up against you. You had no place to find peace of heart at all. I thought at that time that if you stayed with us it would always be like that for you, but if you should depart from home you would one day feel that mother and home were dear to you. So in the spring of your fourteenth year I sent you off to far away Edo. Ah! how hard it was! Other parents with fourteen year old sons would in three or four years time give the responsibility of the house and lands to their sons and thus provide for them while enjoying their own easier future but while you were still a young and underdeveloped youth I sent you off to the hard life of the labourer.

How cruel a father others must have thought me. Ah! but it was the result of fate, decided in a previous existence. This year, even if it killed me, I intended to go to Edo and get your help for a pilgrimage I planned

to make, following the steps of Shinran's original 24

disciples,¹⁶ but instead you came home and have since nursed me. Somehow I feel there is some deep destiny in this, too. Now even if I die I shall have no regrets."

All this he said with tears streaming down his face. All I was able to do was to prostrate myself before him unable to utter a single word. The months and years have passed by with ever increasing speed, like a wheel rolling down a hill.¹⁷ This is the twenty fifth year that I have wander-¹⁸ed like a floating cloud first to the east and then to the west, away from my father's side. Yes, I have wandered far from the blessings that a father gives, blessings so deep as to be like crimson double-dyed, or as the depths of snow upon mount Fuji which even in the summer lies.¹⁹ Away from his side until now my head is crowned with grey, my sin thus greater than the five most grievous sins that justly fit a man for eternal misery.²⁰

I revered him in my heart, fighting tears, lest seeing them should make his condition worse. I wiped my face and laughing said, "Don't think about such things, just get well as soon as possible", and encouraged him to take some more medicine.

I said to my father, "When you are well again I will be the Yataro of long ago, I will stay and work the land and put your heart at ease. Forgive me for how things have been until now." At this he was overjoyed.

May 7th.

Clear skies. Senroku went to Zenkōji to get medicine. The summer day was long and tedious and father

wanted something to eat. Because he is not fond of grains and cereal foods I thought I would like to give him a firm and juicy pear but because our home is in the depths of Shinano the leaves in their abundance grow green upon the trees, but all they finally leave behind them is the white and glistening snow, and the cold wind which even in the summer blows over mount and moor!

When the seller of early green plums announced her wares at our gate father fretted saying, "I want to eat green plums", but I would not let him eat them as they would have been like poison to him. How I longed to see the day when he would be well and simply eat whatever he wanted. I felt irritated because of this, but there he was, his appearance so pathetic with his heavy looking head slowly lolling from side to side.

May 8th.

Clear skies. The rice planting finished, many relatives and others, having heard themselves and then having passed the news of father's illness on to others, came to pay their respects to him.

Some brought gifts of rice-wine and others of buckwheat flour for making noodles, having heard that father liked them. Father nodded happily to each visitor and with his hands clasped together before him politely thanked each one.

"A drink while you are alive is better than wine when you are gone"²¹ is the feeling of the Chinese people as well as ourselves. A kind word to the living is much better than a grand funeral celebration after the person has died.²²

The world gets worse, people see the mote in another's

eye but cannot see the beam in their own! Some people (Senroku) are underhand in almost everything they do. One would hardly think he was his father's son, the things he does!

2.4. ²³ Ukegataki hito to umarete nayo take no sugu
naru michi ni hairu yoshi mo kana.

Considering the rare blessing

It is to be born a man,

How much better then it would be for him

To grow straight and true

Like the young bamboo.

In the evening, around eleven o'clock, father could not sleep, and thinking that the night was very long he asked me again and again, three, four, seven, even nine times over and over, "Hasn't the cock crowed yet?".

The only light was from the stars, whose brightness made the dark shadows of the fir and maple at the edge of the eaves here and there darker still, while the hooting of the owl rang out in the small hours of the morning.

Ah! the mimicked cry of the cock crowing ²⁴ could open the barrier gate but it is the work of heaven to bring the brightness of the morning. We do not know the magic art of putting fire into a bag ²⁵ nor do we have the power to recall the sun, ²⁶ once set.

May 10th.

Glear skies. Fretfully father said again and again that he would like to eat a firm juicy pear but even though I asked at every house I could think of, of relative and friend alike, not one had even one pear

stored away, for this is a poor mountain village even in the summer time..

Today, the medicine being all used up, I thought I would go to Zenkōji, so at dawn I made my preparations, left the house and set out. In the faint brightness of the May sky at dawn, the surrounding mountains²⁷ were yet adorned with snow which was the final symbol of the now departing spring, and a few blossoms remained among the fresh green leaves upon the trees. On the lower slopes of the mountainsides were dark patches where the snow had melted. Locally, these patches are known fondly as 'mountain sowers' because they herald a new season of seed sowing. From here and there the song of the mountain cuckoo echoed gaily. I asked myself, "Why is it only I whose heart this morn does not rejoice?".

²⁸
Just after 6:30 I reached the post-town of Mure. It was from here some twenty four years ago, on the day I left for Edo, that I said my last farewells to father who had accompanied me thus far. I vaguely recalled the sound of the river and the shape of the hillside road and somehow the recollection made me feel glad, but the people I saw were all strangers to me.

I hurried along lest I find the doctor not at home and reached Zenkōji at around 8:00am. It seemed the doctor Dōyū was still at breakfast for I heard his voice sounding from the inner room. I told him about my father's condition and he immediately took up his little wooden spoon, mixed some medicine and gave it to me.

Since long ago this town has been a centre for Amida Buddhism and many shops nestle in rows close together, the cloth banners over their doorways flapping wildly in the wind while people go in and out upon their business. Some have trecked to Zenkōji from counties far away, desiring to become buddhas in the next life. As for me, today I had come for the sake of my father's life, to get medicine and search for a pear.

I had not accomplished the latter, so I quickly nodded in the direction of the temple and worshipped from a distance. Although I rushed here and there²⁹ and went to all the dry-goods stores and greengrocers, longing all the time just to find one pear, no one would even take the trouble to look for one for me and as I searched I became sadder and sadder still.

In ages past, the disciples of Confucius found, at his death, bamboo shoots under the snow and fish in the frozen lake but I cannot find even one solitary pear! Has heaven deserted me? My lack of filial piety will extend even into the next life! My father will be waiting for a pear and if I return empty handed however will I console him? The very thought of this choked my breast, and my falling tears, though I tried to hold them back, moistened the road I trod.

Feeling embarrassed lest others saw me thus and thought me mad, I cupped my hands over my face and tried to compose myself. "If there is not a pear here there will not be one anywhere", I thought to myself, and hurried home to give the medicine to father.

Thus, empty handed, I reached Yoshida where four or five³⁰

crows upon a branch looked at me and began to caw.³¹

Thinking of father, I hurried on without even stopping to catch my breath, and reached home about two o'clock in the afternoon.

Father looked better than usual and smiled at me. Thinking that if I told him I didn't have a pear, it would make him worse I sighed, not knowing what to do, and when he asked me, all I could do was to tell him exactly what had happened. Just to make him feel a bit better I said, "I must go to Takada³² tomorrow and fetch one from there", but I had no real intention of going, and all night long I regretted what I had said.

May 20th.

The fever worsens. Father has eaten only one little dough cake and by noon his face was very pale and his eyes half closed. His lips moved as if he wanted to say something but no words came. Each time he inhaled, the phlegm sounded heavy on his chest, making it difficult for him to breathe. His breathing became gradually fainter.

The shadows, made by the sunshine entering the window, showed it to be around two o'clock and by this time father was not able to perceive if anyone was near him or not and there seemed to be no hope for him at all. How I longed to see him in good health again. I would have traded my own life for his if only I could have done so. He had wanted things to eat which I had refused him lest they made his condition worse but now not even the wisdom of Giba³³ or Henjaku³⁴, or even the power of all the gods and buddhas could help him.

All I could do was to say the Buddhist prayers for salvation over and over again.

2.5. Nesugata no hae ou mo kyō ga kagiri kana.

Today,

Will it be the last

In which I brush the flies away

From his sleeping form?

As this day, too, drew to a close, all I could do was to moisten his lips from the bowl of water at his pillow. The moon shone in through the windows and everyone else was sleeping quietly. About the time when in the distance the crowing of the cock can be heard, father's breathing became increasingly faint and as I had feared previously, the phlegm from time to time began to stick in his throat. As there was no hope and the thread of life was about to break I thought that at least I would like to take the phlegm from his throat for him, but I am not the famous Chinese physician Kuwada³⁵ and did not know how to do it. In my sorrow and distress all I could do was to wring my hands despairingly and wait for him to die. There was no help not even from the gods and buddhas.

Dawn was breaking bright and clear when just after five o'clock his breathing ceased and he lay as one asleep. I clung to his lifeless body. "If this is all a dream" I thought, "let me awaken from it quickly", but dream or reality I felt like one lost in the darkness without a guiding light as the dawn broke upon me in my hopelessness. In this transient ever changing world, the blossoms of the spring³⁶ are blown and scattered by the wind and the autumn

moon is hidden by the clouds which share its sky. Thus, and more so, is this life where all that lives must die,³⁷ all who meet must part and every one of us must once walk the path of death. How foolish was I then to think that father would not die.³⁸

Even though I had nursed him faithfully, going without sleep night after night, he passed away like a fleeting bubble upon the water. Those who had just two days previously defied him and argued with him now embraced his lifeless form, tears streaming down their faces, unable even to say the Buddhist chants their voices choked with sobbing. Seeing this, I realised that the ties that bound my father and my step-mother had not³⁹ been broken.

May 21st.

Because the priest who would officiate at the funeral lived in Shiozaki,⁴⁰ a village some thirty six kilometres away, it was decided to hold the funeral on the morrow, the twenty second. Relatives and friends, however, began to gather quickly and started making the bright paper flowers which would be used as decorations at the funeral and thus in their activity seemed, for a little while, to forget their sorrow. The rays of the sun now reflected on just one wall of the room, the mountain crows, their cawing, heralding the evening, returned towards the mountains in the west, and the temple bell at sunset, sounding the close of day, echoed out over all and everyone. Even without these things it was a sorrowful evening. Most of those who had gathered had by now returned to their own homes and the

very shadows cast by the lamp in the room seemed to me somehow so very lonely and this added further to my grief.

Knowing this night would be the very last time I would see my father's face, I slept beside him and each time I arose to light fresh incense sticks lest there be none burning, I gazed upon him. How lifeless his face was now, how changed it was from the time just two days ago when, with laughter, we had talked together about my future. When I think back it was then that I was to see his smiling face for the last time. When in distress from his illness, he always felt better in the mornings and even during these short May nights was always waiting for the daybreak. I, too, was always happy to see his face when he felt better in the mornings, and waited impatiently for the dawn, hating the daybreak temple bell for its lateness in sounding and cursing the cock for not crowing earlier, but the dawn of this night would bring the final parting.

What a sorrowful day it will be tomorrow! Just to think of it filled my breast with remorse and caused my heart to break. There being no one else in the lonely room, I wept unashamedly and my bloodshot tears kept my eyes from sleep as I looked upon my dead father's face.

Until this night the dawn had seemed so long in breaking, but now, how swiftly the morning came.

May 28th.

Seven days have passed since father died. While he was still with us he urged me to take a wife and live

in Kashiwabara. He told the others, too, that I should do this, but they pretend they never heard him say such things. "Whoever heard of such a will!" they say, themselves full of every conceivable greed.⁴¹

Having no desire for further heated argument with them I will revert to my previous life of wandering among the rocks and trees, despising the wind and hiding from the rain, for now having only myself to care about there will be no shame in such a life for me. However, to simply hold my peace would be to go against my father's dying wishes. If you strike it, sparks may fly even from a poor flint and even a cracked bell will give out some sound when struck. This is the very nature of things. Therefore I will not rush recklessly away from home in silence without hearing their response, for this, too, would be against my father's wishes.

After having talked with them about the division of the house and the land they said that they would abide by the will and so I left the matter in the hands of the Kobayashi family elders and said no more.

2.6. Chichi arite akebono mitashi ao tahara.

Oh! that father, too, were here

As dawn breaks

Gleam before me

Upon green fields and pastures.

(b). Kyowa Ninen Ku Nikki.

This short unedited work was written on the back of an old calendar in 1802 when Issa was thirty nine years old. It contains 91 haiku verses all by Issa.⁴² The verses are interspersed with place names and literary jottings.

Selected Translation.

2.7. Kadomatsu ya hitorishi kiku wa yoru no ame..

At the gate
New Year pine decorations,
While all alone
I listen to the evening rain.

2.8. Ware wa ano yama no kodama ya kanko dori.

Me?
I am yonder mountain's echo,
O, mountain cuckoo.

2.9. Hitori na wa waga hoshi naran ama no kawa.

That lone star
Is that one mine?
The Milky Way.

(c). Kyōwa Kuchō.

This collection of verses covers the period from April 11th. 1803 until December 11th. 1803. It contains 840 verses, almost 70 of which are by poets other than Issa. Issa was 40 years old when he wrote this work.⁴³ It is well dated and contains notes of places he visited during this time, but gives very little information or comment about the actual circumstances to which his poetry was a response. It reveals to us the fact that by this time Issa was writing around one hundred verses a month.

Selected Translations.

2.10. Amenbō yoko ni kuwaete hatsu awase.

A lollipop
Sideways in her mouth
In her first kimono.

2.11. Ukijima ni tsuite koyokashi kankodori.

Floating islets
Come,
Come float this way.
Mountain cuckoo.

2.12. Mugi kari no yōsha mo nashi ya kotoshi take.

Reaping carelessly,
Cutting with the wheat
This year's young bamboo.

2.13. Mugi no ho ya watakushikata wa take no deki.⁴⁴

Ears of wheat,
But as for us
How fares the young bamboo?

2.14. Samidare ya nikai sumai no kusa no hana.

Early summer rains.

From the upstairs window

I see flowers growing

On the thatched roof below.

2.15. Natsuyama ya hito ashi zutsu ni umi miyuru.

On the summer mountain

With each step I take

The sea unfolds below me.

2.16. Murasame no kakare tote⁴⁵ shimo ao sudare.

Passing showers.

Do they say,

"Come fall on us",

The green bamboo screens?

2.17. Yasezune o daki awase keri kiri hito ha.

While sitting

Hugging my skinny shins

One pawlonia leaf

Falls.

2.18. Asagao ya shitataka nureshi tori ame..

Made dripping wet

By the passing shower

The morning glory.

2.19. Yūgure ya hiza o idakeba mata hito ha.

Eventide,

While sitting, embracing my knees,

There falls

Another leaf.

2.20. Korosare ni kotoshi mo kita yo oda no kari.

They've come again this year

To be killed!

Wild geese of Oda.

- 2.21. Waga hoshi wa doko ni tabine ama no kawa.

My star

Where does it sleep on its journey

In the Milky Way.

- 2.22. Hoshimukae Ōyodo katsura doko yoken.

Along the Ōyodo river at Katsura⁴⁶

From where shall I

View the stars?

- 2.23. Nesobette funzori kaette hoshimukae.

Sprawled on the ground

On my back with legs outstretched

Viewing the stars.

- 2.24. Korosare ni minami e yuku ka amatsu kari.

Is it to be killed

That you fly southward

Wild geese in the sky?

- 2.25. Yorikakaru tabi ni hiyatsuku hashira kana.

The wooden pillar

Each time I rest against it

How cold it feels.

- 2.26. Kawanishi no kokyō mo miete asa samumi.

It, too, can be seen,

The old home town

On the west bank of the river

In the morning coldness.

- 2.27. Yūshigure uma mo kokyō ni muite naku.

Evening showers.

The horse, too,
Turns towards the place where it was born
And neighs.

2.28. Uma no ko no kokyō hanaruru aki no ame

The foal goes off,
Separated from its birthplace
In the Autumn rain.

2.29. Ta no kari no furusato ika ni aki no ame.

The wild geese in the fields,
Where is home for them
In the Autumn rain?

2.30. Akisame ya tomoshibi utsuru hizagashira.

Autumn rains
The light of the lamp
Reflects on my kneecaps.

2.31. Asagao ya onna kuruma no ketōjin.

Morning glories.
In the lady's carriage
Rides a foreigner.

2.32. Kakashi nimo ushiro mukareshi sumika kana.

A dwelling
Upon which even the scarecrow
Has turned his back upon.

2.33. Karigoya no yoake nari keri inu no suzu.

Dawn breaks
On the hunter's hut
To the sound of dogs' bells.

2.34. Aki no kaze oya naki ni ware fukisoburi.

Now motherless and fatherless

Yet harder still it blows upon me,
The autumn wind.

2.35. Haru no kaze kusa fukakutemo kokyō nari.

Spring breezes,
Though the weeds be deep,
Home is home.

2.36. Karatawara tataite mitari yo samu kana.

The empty grain-sack,
I patted it
But it was empty
On this cold night.

2.37. Yūzakura ie aru hito wa toku kaeru.

Evening cherry blossoms.
Those who have a home to go to,
Hurry to it.

2.38. Temaneke wa hito no chichi nari aki no kure.

The beckoning hand
Belongs to another's father.
Autumn draws in.

2.39. Ume sakedo uguisu nakedo hitori kana.

The plum tree blossoms,
The nightingale sings,
But I am all alone.

2.40. Akebono no haru soso ni karigi kana.

Dawn breaks in early spring
As I put on
Borrowed clothes.

2.41. Kuchi akete oya matsu tori aki no ame.

Mouths wide open,
The young birds wait

For their parents

In the autumn rain.

- 2.42. Ukijima ya ugoki nagara no semi shigure.

The floating islets,

As they move,

The song of cicadas

Like autumn rains.

- 2.43. Oya shika no kakurete miseru ko no ma kana.

The mother deer,

Hiding

Then showing herself

Among the trees.

- 2.44. Seiten no mahiru ni hitori izuru kana.

At the height of noon under blue skies,

I set out,

Alone.

- 2.45. ⁴⁷
Sando kū tabi mottaina shigure kumo.

On my travels,

Three meals a day,

What a waste!

- 2.46. Bakanagaki yo to mōshitaru yo naga kana.

The long night

So long I say

So ridiculously long!

- 2.47. Waga io no fuyu wa kitari keri yase daiko.⁴⁸

To my humble dwelling

Winter has come,

Skinny radishes.

- 2.48. Yoru yoru no yuki o tomo naru nazōsui.

Night after night

With the snow for company

Rice and vegetable broth.⁴⁹

- 2.49. Ono ga mi ni narete hi no nai kotatsu.

As for me

My body is used to it,

A fireless hearth.

- 2.50. Nanten yo kotatsu yagura yo sabishisa yo.

Ah! hanging gourd,

Ah! cover for the empty hearth,

Ah! loneliness!

- 2.51. Torafugu no kao o tsundasu ha kage kana.⁵⁰

The face of the striped blowfish

Poking out

From among the leaves.

- 2.52. Asamashi to fugu ya miruran hito no kao.

To the blowfish

How wretched they must look,

People's faces!

- 2.53. Hatsu yuki ya tazo kiyokashi sayu dobin.⁵¹

First fall of winter snow,

Will there be a visitor?

In my earthen bottle

Just plain water!

- 2.54. Yude jiru no keburu kakine nari mizore furu.

Through the fences

Of the houses

The steam from seething broth.

Sleet falls.

- 2.55. Tori no ha no hisashi no sawaru samusa kana.
 So cold
 That the wings of the birds
 Touch the eaves of the houses.⁵²
- 2.56. Shigururu ya ushi ni hikarete zenkōji.⁵³
 Pulled by an oxen
 In the drizzle
 To Zenkōji.
- 2.57. Yoigoshi no tōfu akari ya ka no sawagu.
 In the light
 Of the soft whiteness
 Of last night's left over beancurd
 Mosquitoes hover excitedly
- 2.58. Zensaki ni susume naku nari haru no ame.
 On the other side
 Of my meal tray
 The sparrows twitter.
 Spring rains.
- 2.59. Mikagirishi kokyō no yama no sakura kana.
 Cherry blossoms
 Are they those that grow on the mountains
 Of the homelands
 I have forsaken.
- 2.60. Yamakaze o fumikotaetari misosazai.
 Holding her own
 Against the mountain winds,
 A wren.
- 2.61. Haikai no jigoku wa soko ka kankodori.⁵⁴
 Is it over there?
 The Hades of Haiku Verse,

O mountain cuckoo.

2.62. Kogarashi ya kabe no kiwa naru uma no oke.

Cold, winter bleakness.

The horse's feed bucket

Is put close to the wall.

Section Two. THE KYŌWA PERIOD. 1801-1803.

The Development of Issa's Distinctive Style.

Introduction.

Although the themes of loneliness and poverty develop as major characteristics of Issa's work in this period, similar development is not seen in any other of the themes which were later to become major characteristics of his poetry. His poetry is almost all serious, and shows very little of the humour he was later to display. There is very little sarcasm or self-denigration. There is very little use of the vernacular, colloquialisms, or proverbial sayings. There is only one verse about children in the whole of the Kyōwa Kuchō, i.e. ref. 2.10. Religious verse of any flavour, light or serious, are also absent. That Issa showed considerable interest in Buddhist words and sayings at this time is demonstrated in the Chichi no Shūen Nikki and by the fact that in his Nikki Yohaku,⁵⁵ i.e. notes in the margin of this diary work, he lists many words and phrases from Buddhist literature. Issa showed a keen interest in Buddhist religious terminology at this time, but the effect of this interest does not reveal itself in any obvious way in his poetry.

There are no optimistic kimi ga yo verses at all in this period. Issa seems to be retreating into himself and the resultant gloominess pervades his work as a whole.

Of the three extant works of this period the Chichi no Shūen Nikki contains only seven verses and the Kyōwa Ninen Ku Nikki, although containing over ninety verses, is not a finalized work but rather a list of the

drafts of poems. Consequently it is the 'Kyōwa Kuchō' which provides us with most of the poetic material for the tracing of Issa's style during this period.

The 'Chichi no Shūen Nikki' is, however, extremely valuable for the background it gives to Issa's emotional condition at this time and is therefore very helpful for the understanding of many of his poems during this period. It ends with the verse ref. 2.6. While a poem of grief at his father's death and an expression of the longing he felt for his father's company, it is not a solemn poem. In spite of his loss Issa looks out upon the pastures and fields and is obviously being refreshed by the sight, after many days and nights at his father's bedside.. However, back in Edo the stark reality of his aloneness seems to break upon him with great force.

(i). Issa and Chinese Studies.

One of the most remarkable developments in this period is the strong interest Issa suddenly exhibited in Chinese verse. In the Kyōwa Kuchō there are well over 200 verses of Issa's which are haiku adaptations based upon Chinese verses found in the 'Shikyō', which is the Japanese name for the Chinese classical poetry collection 'The Book of Odes' or 'The Book of Songs'. The 'Shikyō' is one of the five great classics of Chinese literature. It contains some 305 verses dating from the tenth to the seventh century B.C. It is to Chinese poetry what the 'Manyōshū' was later to become to Japanese

classical poetry.

The poems in this collection are not just simple folk songs but are governed by a strict metre and are the product of a sophisticated poetic tradition. The poems are divided into three major groups, the provincial or rustic poems in which are included many love poems, the elegant or courtly poems, and finally ritual songs and eulogistic poems.⁵⁷

Issa's attention was captured by the first group of these poems, which are largely pastoral in setting and are written in a simple rustic style, under the surface of which, was often a thinly disguised light hearted sarcasm and parody.⁵⁸ It is therefore not surprising that Issa was attracted mainly to this part of the collection.

According to the 'Kyōwa Kuchō' Issa attended a lecture on the 'Shikyō' on the 20th. of April 1803.⁵⁹ From this time on he seems to have devoted himself to the study of this work until the end of this year. His efforts in the study of this work must have been quite intensive for within the space of three months he was using it for the basis of much of his own poetry.

It was not unusual, indeed it was the norm, for a serious poet to study classical Chinese poetry. Issa studied Chinese poetry to some degree while a student in the Katsushika school, but such was his enthusiasm during the Kyōwa period, that one is left with the impression that he is endeavouring to make up some lack in his education as a serious poet.

By studying classical Chinese poetry Issa was follow-

ing the example of the great haiku masters of the past. Bashō, for example, was greatly influenced by the work of the Chinese poets Tu Fu (712-770) and Li Po (701-762).⁶⁰ The amazing thing about Issa's study of classical Chinese poetry at this time, however, is that it begins so suddenly, continues with such intensity and then discontinues as abruptly as it began.

Before this time, although Issa alluded to the Chinese classics in his prose,⁶¹ they were not evident themselves in his poetry, but during this short period, towards the end of the Kyōwa era, almost all his recorded verses were based on them. His study however, although intense, was not thorough and he often used just fragments selected from the Chinese verses and only parts of the meanings they contained.

During the course of lectures he attended, he also studied another of the Five Classics of Chinese Literature, 'The Book of Changes'. This work is a treatise on the art of divination. Issa used this work for the basis of a few of his poems in the 'Kyōwa Kuchō', though not without error.⁶²

Among Issa's verses that are based upon the 'Shikyō' are the poems ref. 2.26, 2.27, 2.34, 2.39, 2.59.

The Chinese poem upon which poem ref. 2.26 is based is about a woman who is wed into the court. She bears a son who will ascend to the throne. However, she has to cross a wide river and return to her own home. Political conditions make it impossible for her to return to her

son.. Even when he is about to ascend to the throne all she can do is stand on the opposite bank of the river and long to be on the other side..

Issa imparts the background of this verse to his own circumstances.. He changes the direction to west, the direction of Kashiwabara from Edo, and writes a poem about his yearning for home, where the memory of his father is still strong..⁶³

Issa's verse ref. 2.27 describes a horse neighing in what Issa surmises to be the direction of the place where it was born.. The Chinese verse upon which this is based tells of a young man who wanders far from friends, family and home and becomes the adopted son of a distant family through marriage. His father-in-law does not treat him kindly.⁶⁴

Issa imparts the sentiment of the Chinese verse into his own poem. He presents the horse as in the same predicament as the young man in the Chinese verse and also imparts his own feeling of separation from home and father, to the horse.

The verse ref. 2.34. describes Issa as motherless and fatherless, and with the autumn wind blowing yet harder still upon him. This poem is based upon a Chinese verse in which a young soldier, posted at a great distance from home and loved ones thinks longingly of them. He climbs a bare mountain, gazes in the direction of home and thinks of his father. The father's farewell words to his son are recalled in the Chinese verse. He tells the young lad to work hard, fulfil his duties faithfully and return

home safely.

Issa is thinking of his dead father and longing for home. The autumn wind blows hard against him, an expression Issa seems to use as a metaphor for 'the hardships of life'. In the same way as the young soldier is far from home and on the battlefield, so Issa sees himself in hostile and difficult surroundings, i.e. in Edo and far from home.

The verse ref. 2.39 which vividly describes Issa's loneliness is based upon a Chinese verse about a woman who loses her husband and is left utterly alone.⁶⁶ Again Issa adapts the sentiment of this verse to his own lonely circumstances.

Issa's poem ref. 2.59. is based upon a Chinese verse in which, having lost the support of the common people, a provincial ruler loses his post and tries to return to his homeland. The poem is given the caption "Yellow Bird". This caption alludes to the heartlessness of the people who chase little birds away from the millet seeds begrudging them even a few grains. The ruler is treated by the people in this way and no one gives him any help at all.⁶⁷

Issa fills his verse with the sentiment of this poem and is in turn alluding to the title of 'mukudori' or 'starling' which was given to those who came from the snowy regions of Japan to eke out a living in the city of Edo during the winter months. He is unwanted in Edo and the 'crumbs' he needs to exist are begrudged him. Because of this he longs to be home where he imagines the cherry

blossoms to be blooming and the nightingales in song. In this instance, he is using the Chinese verse and its caption very skilfully and this is one of his better verses based upon classical Chinese poetry.

Issa's verse;

68

Aki no yo no dokushin nagaya mutsumajiki.

Autumn nights,

In the bachelors' quarters,

Harmony.

is also based on the same Chinese verse as poem ref. 2.26.. but a different aspect of the Chinese verse is used. The woman who cannot return to her husband is depicted as yearning for male companionship and sympathizing in a slightly sarcastic way with others who are separated from their partners, while extolling the fact that with only oneself to think about, life is in some respects easier..⁶⁹

Issa at this time was living in a 'nagaya', a long single-storied building with communal washing and toilet facilities and with many single rooms opening on to a common corridor which went the whole length of the building.⁷⁰

The 'nagaya' was normally situated at the back of shops or groups of shops in low class areas of the city and was used by single men as lodgings.⁷¹ Issa is implying in his verse that while life is not difficult for a single man in such a place, he yearns for female companionship and possibly a wife, having now turned forty years of age and with no prospect of marriage.

In this way Issa based many of his verses towards the end of this period on the 'Shikyō'. The majority of the Chinese verses which Issa studied and utilized in his own poetry have to do with the theme of loneliness or yearning for loved ones and home.. The fact that Issa was earnestly engaged in the study of this old Chinese classic for part of the period covered by the 'Kyōwa Kuchō' is one reason why his verses at that time lack humor and are pessimistic in their seriousness. Although they are true expressions of his feelings they are not spontaneous. They are deep cries from the heart but the Chinese influence upon them is such that they are the result of studious effort unrelieved by humour or faith. His preoccupation with Chinese verse is also a basic reason for his comparative lack of colloquialisms, proverbial sayings, religious expression and the optimistic 'Kimi ga yo' verses of the previous period.

Some of Issa's verses during the end of this period are simply exercises in haiku based upon verses in the 'Shikyō'. For example poems ref. 2.31, and 2.33 reveal no adaptation of the sentiment or content of the Chinese verse to his own feelings or circumstances, they simply restate the content of the Chinese verse, or part of it, in haiku form, as a purely poetic exercise. The latter of these two verses is reminiscent of Issa's earlier verses in the Tenmei style.

(ii). The Theme of Loneliness.

In most of the verses already quoted, the theme of

loneliness is predominant.

In Japan, with its closely knit and group-conscious society, bound together by Confucian social ethics⁷² and a Buddhist family concept in which the bliss of those in the afterlife is thought to be very much dependent upon the prayers and actions of living relatives,⁷³ to be without any blood relatives, unmarried and not a member of any close-knit association or community would inevitably result in strong feelings of loneliness in most people.

Even today, if the only son of the family decides to give up the practice of the Buddhist religion, very often the father's first concern is for the maintenance of the Buddhist home altar (butsudan), and the fact that there will be no one to chant the Buddhist prayers and perform votive acts at it on his, and other deceased members of the family's behalf, when he has passed into the next life.⁷⁴

Issa's loneliness at being over forty years of age, unmarried and without the prospect of marriage, unwelcome in his own home and home town, and now without his father, should be viewed in this light.

Issa was a member of the Edo haiku fraternity, but he was not, by this time, a close member of any particular group, he was the disciple of no one, and he did not have his own group of disciples in Edo. He lived in cheap lodgings or as a temporary lodger in the homes of

patrons. He did not 'belong', in even the low class neighbourhoods in which he rented dwellings. The fact that he lived in the equivalent of the toolshed of a shrine in the large city of Edo, the situation which introduces the ⁷⁵'Kyōwa Kuchō', is symbolic of his loneliness and poverty at this time..

It is against this background that we should interpret Issa's poetry of this period.

The following verses will emphasize even further just how prominent this theme was in Issa's work at this time even apart from verses based upon Chinese poems. The following poems are spread over the whole of the Kyōwa period. See poems ref. 2.7, 2.9, 2.17, 2.19, 2.21, 2.25, 2.30, 2.44, 2.50.

There are no seasonal words in the last two poems. Issa composed comparatively few verses which did not contain a seasonal word but the last verse in this list is a vivid illustration that Issa was prepared to sacrifice convention for effect. This verse is a bold expression of his loneliness, his poverty and the general wretchedness of his life at this time.. The effect is made more vivid still by the string of three nouns and no seasonal word. Issa did not set out to change the haiku verse in any fundamental way. He did, however, gradually begin to find his seasonal words from among, and in relation to, the lives of ordinary people.. This tendency was partly the product of verses born out of his own loneliness and poverty. It was more real to

him than the conventional phrases upon which tradition insisted.

In all the verses in the previously quoted list, loneliness is the underlying predominant theme. One gets the impression that almost everything he sees reminds him of his own loneliness and is made, through his poetry, to appear symbolic of it. Everyday objects in his room, the hearth cover, the lamp, the wooden pillar and even his own kneecaps⁷⁶ all serve to remind him of his utter and wretched solitude. When he looks outside and sees a leaf separated from the branch and falling, he sees himself now separated from his father and home, and wandering aimlessly not belonging anywhere at all. When he looks up at the stars, they serve only to remind him that he is still single and alone. although past forty years of age. Even when he leaves the solitude of his dwelling and sets out at noon under a clear and bright blue sky it is not with a light heart and a hopeful tread, but with a heavy sense of his own loneliness.

It is as if there is nothing that can deliver him from this haunting feeling of being all alone. It is a heavy cloud of gloom upon him.

There can be no doubt that this aspect of his later mature work, this sense of loneliness, was deeply imprinted upon his life and work at this time.

The following verses serve to illustrate that this sense of loneliness and gloom was further enhanced by the fact of his father's death and the resulting absence

of any blood relatives. See poems ref. 2.28, 2.29, 2.37, 2.38. The following verse also illustrates this fact;

Hitotsu naku wa oya nashi tori aki no kure.⁷⁷

The bird that cries alone

Is the one

Without mother or father.

Autumn draws in.

During this period, the memory of his father lies heavy on his heart. Much of what he sees in the world of nature and in the everyday lives of others reminds him constantly that his father is dead, and he imparts his own feelings to the objects of his verses.

(iii). The Theme of Poverty in this Period.

Together with poems on loneliness, poems on poverty are also conspicuous during this period. The poverty Issa depicts is plain and down to earth. It is not tempered or beautified by rustic sentiment or religious purity. It is a hard practical poverty, a poverty he had come to know through experience. It is not the chosen poverty of the great master Basho which was seen as a purifying influence upon his art. Nor is it the contrived pastoral humbleness of the theoretical poem. It has the wretchedness of reality about it, a gloominess known only to those for whom poverty is not a matter of choice. This is illustrated clearly in the poems ref. 2.36, 2.40, 2.47, 2.48, 2.49, 2.50.

All these verses contain common sights or everyday things as the objects used to describe poverty, the

empty rice-sack, borrowed clothes, poormans' soup, the fireless hearth, steam from the broth in the homes of others and the cheapest of vegetables. There is a bleakness about these verses unrelieved by humour of any kind. They reveal, without a shadow of doubt, that life was desperately hard for Issa at this time and that hunger and cold were no strangers to him, and that when he was not eating at the homes of patrons what he ate was of the meanest fare.

In the verse ref. 2.54. we have a good example of the use of a seasonal word closely connected with the everyday life of the common man. Because of the use of the word 'sleet' the verse is unmistakably a winter poem, but the word 'sleet' is contrasted with the steam from the houses, which in turn emphasizes the fact that the poet is outside in the cold while others are inside their homes and about to eat hot broth. It is, therefore, a subjective verse about Issa's own poverty while at the same time it is an objective observation of the life of the ordinary household. This particular verse is close to Issa's mature style.

Compared to the Kansei period, poems of loneliness and poverty show a sharp increase in both number and intensity. The hopefulness of his journeys revealed in the Kansei period now changes to an awareness that it is always the homes of others to which he is heading. He is obviously not enjoying his poetic journeys as he had in the past.

Hagi samu ya yuki saki saki wa hito no ie.⁷⁸

Bush clover, how cold it is,

On and on I go,

Yet it is always to

The homes of others.

(iv). Poems on Small and Weak Creatures

In verses previously quoted it can readily be seen that Issa is increasingly writing verses about small animals. He mentions the sparrow, the foal, wild geese in the fields and the lonely bird. In addition to these in verses ref. 2.20, 2.24, 2.41, 2.43, 2.60, we have the wild geese heading for the hunter's gun and snare, young birds waiting to be fed by their parents, the mother deer seeking to attract attention away from her young, and the little wren fighting against the mountain winds.

In some of these verses there is a pessimistic note, in others a sense of struggle. There are none with a light or optimistic air, a mark of his later verses. The basis for his later work is being laid but its maturity is not attained. Although Issa is obviously expressing his own subjective feelings through these verses, the verses themselves are nearly all objective. One does not sense the unity with, or the sympathy for, the small animals in these verses which he was later to display. The heaviness of Issa's own feelings is such that his view is pessimistic; he observes, but he does not reach out to the animals in his poetry. He uses them as

vehicles to express his own feelings but does not have the breadth of spirit, or largeness of heart which truly feels for them.

It is very evident, however, that it is this sense of loneliness and feeling of gloom, through the loss of his father, that is one of the very basic reasons for his interest in and empathy for the small and weak. Loneliness, poverty and empathy with the small and weak of the world of nature, three major characteristics of Issa's mature work, are very much bound together. It is therefore not surprising to find each of them increasing in this period.

(v). Issa's Observation of the Everyday Life of Ordinary People.

Issa possessed a keen sense of realistic and objective observation. This reveals itself in both his conventional and unconventional poems. During the Kyōwa period Issa's poetry is, for the most part, objective in its outward form. Verses ref. 2.18, 2.55, 2.62 are purely objective poems in which Issa's keen sense of observation notices raindrops falling from the lowly morning glory even though the rain has stopped, small birds keeping close to the warmth of the house, and the horses feed bucket moved closer to the wall to shield the feeding horse from as much of the cold as possible. (It may be remembered that Issa used to care for the horse when he was a boy in Kashiwabara).

In the Kyōwa period Issa increasingly turns his keen gaze to the objects of everyday life. This development of one of the major themes of his mature style is not as pronounced as the themes of loneliness and poverty, but is nonetheless far more evident than in the previous period.

Verses 2.14 and 2.57 are evidence of this. The subjects of the poems are flowers growing from a thatched roof, and last night's left over bean curd. To these can also be added the previously quoted verses ref. 2.36, 2.49, 2.50, 2.53, 2.54, 2.62.

All these verses are concerned with ordinary objects, ordinary circumstances and ordinary households. It is not the great sights of the city, or the beauty of the countryside but the backstreets and the inside of ordinary homes that Issa writes about here.

The vocabulary Issa uses in a few of his verses of this period also contains words, though yet few in number, which indicate that his poetry is moving towards the practical everyday life of the common people. The two most noticeable examples of this are ;

Yūtsuki no kebakebashisa o aki no kaze.⁷⁹

The evening moon

Glowing with gawdy splendour

In the autumn wind.

The term 'kebakebashisa' was commonly used to describe a young woman made up and dressed in her finery going out to meet her beau at night.⁸⁰

Natsuyama no aburagittaru tsuki yo kana.

Over the summer mountains,

Looking sleek and glossy,

The moon this night..

The caption to this verse is the word kokio. A kokio was a sleeveless jacket made of lambskin leather which took on a sleek and glossy sheen.⁸² To describe the moon Issa uses the word aburagittaru, which was commonly used to describe the oily sheen on one of these jackets.

The use of such words as these in his verses is further evidence of the growing independent nature of Issa's work. It is as if Issa, during this period, is beginning to venture forth towards a new and uncharted course for some of his work. Issa continually sought to improve himself in the realm of conventional haiku verse, necessitated by the company of other poets, but at the same time it becomes clear that he was not constrained by such necessity for in the use of the above words he is pioneering new ground and exploring new areas of subject matter and bolder forms of expression. It is in his more private poetry that his unique style first begins to become clearly evident. (It should be constantly remembered that a great deal of Issa's extant work was not intended for public perusal). This is why his unique style is developed first through the themes of poverty and loneliness. The verses he composed sitting alone and travelling alone are those that first revealed the signs of his later uniqueness.

Although colloquialisms and proverbial sayings are not numerous during this period, they are a little more in

evidence than in the Kansei period. For example in poem ref. 2.23 Issa uses the colloquial expression funzori, to lie on one's back with legs outstretched, and in poem ref. 2.46 we find the word bakanagaki, a colloquialism meaning 'ridiculously long'. The word watakushikata in verse ref. 2.13 is a purely conversational expression, and the phrase ushi ni hikarete Zenkōji in verse ref. 2.56, is from a local proverbial saying based on a legend in which an old irreligious woman was pulled by an ox to Zenkō temple by the piece of cloth she was bleaching which had caught on one of its horns. From that time on she attended the temple regularly.

During this period Issa also began to use bold repetitive everyday phrases in his poetry. The following verse is one example of this:

83

Zaburi zaburi ame ga furu kare no hara.

With heavy force,

Dashing, dashing down it pours,

The rain

Upon a withered moor.

The phrase zaburi zaburi is a common repetitive onomatopoeic expression still in use today in everyday conversation. As verses which included such colloquial expressions increased, verses in the purely conventional style became less in number, though they can still be found in this period, (e.g. verses ref. 2.16, 2.22, which contain words alluding to classical Japanese poems).

(vi). Issa's Relationship with Seibi.

During the Kyōwa period, when not in Edo, Issa was making his way, often covering the same ground over and over again, from poet to poet in the Shimosa and Kasuza regions just east of the capital.

The two poems ref. 2.8 and 2.44 reveal the sense of meaninglessness and loneliness he experienced during his wanderings at this time.

There was, however, one encouraging development for Issa during the Kyōwa period which was to have a permanent effect upon his work. This was the strengthening of his association with Natsume Seibi and the development of his friendship with the poet-priest Ippyō. Both these men were to have a considerable influence upon Issa as a poet.

Because of his constant journeyings in the Shimosa and Kazusa areas, Issa was to develop his relationships with many poets and patrons. The merchant Matsui, Sōju the wine merchant of Maebashi, Tōyu the son of Ryūsa, the poetess Kakyō, and Gessen who had been a student with Issa under Genmu, were just a few of the 100 or more poets he was to associate with in the Shimosa and Kazusa areas.⁸⁴

All had some influence upon Issa but none to the extent that Natsume Seibi had.

Issa's association with Seibi began towards the end of the Kansei period. This is indicated by the fact that a verse by Seibi appears in the collection Sarabakasa,⁸⁵ and even previous to that, in Issa's first collection

⁸⁶
Tabishūi, which is dated Kansei 7th. year (1795).

Sarabakasa was published in 1798.

In Seibi's preface to Issa's later collection Sankan-
⁸⁷jin he records that he had known Issa for 'the past ⁸⁸
 twenty years'. The Sankanjin was published in 1814.
 This would mean that they knew each other from the year
 1795, when Issa was 32 years of age.

There is to be found in Seibi's collection Zuisai Hikki
⁸⁹a verse by Issa dated Kansei 12th. year (1800). It is
 from about this time that Issa's association, though
 commenced earlier in the Kansei period, began to develop,
 and during the Kyōwa period their association became
 firmly established.

It was through Seibi that Issa also met Ippyō of the
 Hongyō temple in the Yanaka district of Edo. In 1799,
 verses by Seibi, Ippyō and Issa appeared together in a
 collection of verse by Seibi. This indicates that by this
 time they had met and that Seibi was the mutual friend of
 both of them. From this time on, verses by both Issa
 and Ippyō became increasingly frequent in collections of
 verses selected by Seibi. ⁹⁰

For the remainder of Issa's life, until Seibi died,
 Issa valued the company and advice of Seibi. Even after
 Issa moved to Kashiwabara and was unable to meet Seibi
 as frequently as he had in the past, he still sent copies
 of some of his verses to Seibi for evaluation and comment. ⁹¹
 In Issa's work of the Kyōwa period we can find verses
 that are clearly based upon, and strongly influenced

by the work of Seibi. For example;

Ochibashite hinata ni tataru enoki kana.⁹²

The leaves fall,

And standing, now in the sunshine,

The nettle tree.

This verse is listed as his own work, but in one of Seibi's works, the Seibi Kashū, Seibi has a verse which is identical apart from a slight change in the word tataru. Seibi has tateru. Because the word tataru is the less likely choice it is thought that Issa simply⁹³ miscopied Seibi's poem.

In the Kansei period Issa was attracted to the Tenmei style, of which Buson was the founder, and through his interest in this style, continued to study, and compose in conventional haiku poetry. Moving on into the Kyōwa period we find that it is largely through his association with Seibi that Issa continues this study of conventional haiku verse, for Seibi was a leading representative of the traditional Bashō style of haiku.

Seibi's haiku are characterized by his keen sense of observation expressed in verses of a tranquil pastoral nature. For example;

Hi wa suguri kozue no kaki to mi ai tsutsu.⁹⁴

The sun sinking low

Meets eye to eye

With the lonely persimmon

On the bough..

They contrast with Issa's verses in that they have a settled composure and an air of liberality, whereas Issa's

verses begin to take on an emphasis of necessity and desperation, and they become more penetrating in their description and observation of everyday life. Even at this time Issa's verses show a tendency to mix conventional with subjective elements, which eventually becomes characteristic of his mature style.

The verse ref. 2.44 is an example of this. The first part of the poem, Seiten no mahiru ni is a conventional form of opening which one would expect to conclude with an ending in which there is a seasonal word indicating the time of the year, instead, however, it ends with hitori izuru kana, an expression of Issa's personal feeling of loneliness. The gloominess of his subjective feelings is contrasted with the opening phrase 'At the height of noon under blue skies.

The poem is left without a seasonal word, and though Kuriyama (p. 31) feels the opening phrase gives an impression of early winter, when indeed the poem was written, it is not decisive.

The verse, therefore, becomes one of the forerunners of poems to be written in Issa's mature style, in that it is conventional in tone, yet very subjective in content. It lacks the one other major characteristic of Issa's later style in that it contains no common or colloquial expression.

The continual contact with Seibi, which was firmly established during this period, was major factor in preventing Issa's work from degenerating into the purely vulgar and colloquial style that was so popular among the populace of Edo at this time.

To illustrate the way Issa was influenced by the work of Seibi a comparison can be drawn between the following verses. In Kansei 12th. year (1800) Seibi wrote this verse;

Ie arite mata yanagi ari doko made mo.⁹⁵

A house

Then a willow tree

Then willows

As far as you can see.

In the Kyōwa Kuchō we have a verse by Issa which is clearly based on Seibi's poem;

Ie arite mata ie arite natsu kodachi.⁹⁶

A house

Then another house

Then a grove of summer trees.

Seventeen years later we have the following verse by Issa in the Hachiban Nikki:

Harumeku ya yabu arite yuki arite yuki.⁹⁷

Spring dawning

The thicket

The snow

Then yet more snow.

This verse is unmistakably Issa's. Here we have the blending of the conventional and the personal (i.e. Issa's personal view of snow, that of a person who has been brought up to dislike it), blended together in such a way as to make this verse representative of Issa's mature distinctive style, and yet finding its basic pattern and thought, in a verse by Seibi that had

impressed Issa some twenty years earlier.

The above example is a specific illustration of a general trend. Issa utilized the work of many of the poets with whom he came into contact, but in his later years the ideas he gained were expressed in poems that were uniquely his own. Seibi was one of the major contributors, probably the major contributor, to this general influence upon the poetry of Issa.

Conclusion.

The Kyowa period is, in the development of Issa's distinctive style, a time of transition. From the mixture of largely imitative poetry which made up the bulk of his work in the Kansei period, can be seen strongly emerging, two of the major characteristics of his later poetry, i.e. a strong awareness of his loneliness and poverty, and a growing empathy with small and weak creatures, especially those which provide obvious vehicles for the expression of his own feelings at the death of his father and the difficulty of his life in Edo. His poetry has become more personal and subjective but is, for the most part, pessimistic.

Humour is present in only a very few verses, as for example those ref. 2.10, 2.32, and 2.52.

The pervading atmosphere of this period, however, is that of wretched gloominess and deep loneliness. These feelings find their way into many of his verses in such a way as to fill them with a heartfelt, though not necessarily spontaneous, subjectivity which is

incomparably greater than anything in the previous period.

NOTES ON CHAPTER TWO. Section 2.

1. Kaneko p.169.
2. Comp.Works vol.5 p.70.
3. Ito p.193.
4. Ibid. p.195.
5. Kaneko p.169.
6. Issa here uses a phrase from the Shinkokinshū.
Comp. Works vol. 5 p.97.
7. Chikuyō was a haiku poet in the village of Nojiri, about 6 kilometres from Kashiwabara. He was a disciple of Issa's. Comp.Works vol.5 p.97.
8. Jinseki; a doctor, surname Takenouchi. Comp.Works vol.5 p.97.
9. Shinran; founder of the Pure Land Buddhist sect. His anniversary is actually on the 28th. of the 11th. month. Comp.Works vol.5 p.97.
10. The liver of a bear, was at that time, considered a valuable medicine. Comp.Works vol.5 p.97.
11. The expression Issa uses here is taken from the Buddhist scripture Nehankyō, the Sutra of Nirvana.
Comp.Works vol. 5 p.98.
12. The expression Issa uses here is taken from a book of Buddhist/Confucian ethics (Girei:Chūfukuhen).
Comp.Works vol.5 p.98. The precept quoted by Issa teaches that a woman should obey her father before marriage, her husband upon marriage, and her children if widowed.
13. Shingon Buddhism: one of the older Buddhist sects in Japan, begun in the early 9th. century by a monk named Kōbō Daishi (774-835). Shingon is esoteric Buddhism and quite different from the Pure Land sect which appealed to the common populace in its comparative simplicity.
14. Furuma: a village just south of Kashiwabara.
15. A popular belief at this time. Comp.Works vol.5 p.99.
16. In 1232 Shinran gathered together 24 of his disciples, fixed the orthodox teachings of the sect and had them each affix their seals to the document. The 24 then

- travelled throughout Japan spreading their doctrine and making converts. Believers of the Pure Land sect made pilgrimages in their footsteps. Comp.Works vol.5 p.99.
17. Issa here alludes to a phrase from Tsuretsuregusa. Comp.Works vol5 p.99.
18. This should read 'the twenty fourth year', as on the 10th. day of the month in question. Comp.Works vol.5 p.99.
19. Issa is here alluding to a poem in the Manyōshū. Comp.Works vol.5 p.99.
20. Issa uses here a Buddhist religious word gogyakuzai, i.e. the five sins which will cause eternal suffering in hell. They are, to kill one's father, to kill one's mother, to kill anyone who has attained enlightenment, to break the harmony among priests, and to injure a Buddha.
21. Issa here is quoting from classical Chinese poetry in the Hakurakuten. Comp.Works vol. 5 p.100.
22. A quote from the Analects of Confucius. Comp.Works vol.5 p.100.
23. The word ukegataki is taken from the Buddhist sutra Nehankyō. Comp.Works vol. 5 p.100.
24. Issa here is alluding to the same incident referred to in note 19 of section 1. The words tori no sora ne, translated 'the mimicked cry of the cock' is taken from a phrase in the Makura Sōshi. Comp.Works vol.5 p.100.
25. A magic art of ancient China.
26. An allusion to a story in ancient Chinese literature in which a warrior recalls the setting sun during a battle. Comp.Works vol.5 p.100.
27. The phrase Issa uses here is a local one for the mounts Togakushi, Kurohime, Iizuna. Comp.Works vol.5 p.100.
28. Mure; a post town about 8 kilometres south of Kashiwabara.
29. Issa here uses a phrase taken from Tsuretsuregusa. Comp.Works vol. 5 p.100.

30. Yoshida: a district in the northern part of Nagano city, the modern name for Zenkōji.
31. In Japan the crow is a bird of ill-omen.
32. Takada: a town some 40 kilometres north of Kashiwabara.
33. Giba: a famous physician of ancient India.
34. Henjaku: a famous physician of ancient China.
35. Kuwada: a famous physician of ancient China.
36. Issa here uses a phrase from the Heike Monogatari. Comp. Works vol.5 p.103.
37. As above.
38. Issa is here alluding to a phrase in a verse from the Kokinshū. Comp. Works vol.5 p.103.
39. Issa here uses a phrase kairō-dōketsu, which literally means 'growing old together and put into the same grave!'. The phrase comes from the Chinese classic The Book of Odes. It is used to express the firmness of the bond between husband and wife. Comp. Works vol.5 p.103.
40. Shiozaki: now part of Nagano city. The Kobayashi family were registered at the Myōsen temple in Kashiwabara, but it did not have a resident priest at this time, so the priest had to come from Shiozaki. Comp. Works vol.5 p 104.
41. Issa here uses the Buddhist word for the six basic lusts, rokuyoku, that is, the lust of the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the will. Comp. Works vol.5 p.105.
42. Comp. Works vol. 2 p.69-78.
43. Ibid. p.91-178.
44. The two verses ref. 2.12 and 2.13 form a couplet. One should imagine a wheatfield and a bamboo grove side by side. The reapers carelessly cut young bamboo as they reap wheat, while the growers of the bamboo are concerned only for the young bamboo plants.
45. The first phrase of this poem alludes to a verse in the Gosenshū. Comp. Works vol.2 p.102.
46. Katsura: now part of western Kyōto.
47. Issa is here comparing himself to Bashō. By Issa's time three meals a day were the norm, and through the benevolence of his patrons, Issa at times knew

the luxury of such while on his travels. He recalls the travels of Bashō, who often went without, and compares his own plenty. Kaneko p.114. Maruyama p.129.

48. Daikon; here spelt daiko, as it is in the text, is a large white radish, similar in shape to a carrot but two or three times its size.
49. Zōsui: porridge or gruel made by mixing boiled rice with hot water in order to give it more volume. This was a practice of the poor. Fish and vegetables were mixed in to give some kind of flavour, and this constituted a meal. In Issa's case there is no fish, just a few vegetable leaves. The verse is an expression of his poverty.
50. The fish is either encased in leaves on sale at the fishmongers, or wrapped in leaves whilst being carried.
51. A poem of poverty. He has no tea to place before a visitor if one should come.
52. That is, so cold that the birds which nest under the eaves keep so close to the warmth of the house that their wings touch the eaves.
53. This verse is based on the local proverbial saying explained on p.256. Kotowaza Jiten, Fukuinkan Shoten, 1957.
54. This verse was composed at a lonely sulphuric hot spring at a place called Kōshi Tateyama in Toyama prefecture. These springs were known as 'The Valley of Hades'. Comp.Works vol.2 p.177.
55. Comp.Works vol.5 p.87-96.
56. Ibid, vol.2 p.71-78. Ito p.201.
57. Kuriyama p.26.
58. Maruyama p.71.
59. Comp.Works vol.2 p.95.
60. World Within Walls, Keene p.79.
61. See ref. to Prince Mōshu in Kansei Sannen Kikō for example.
62. Comp.Works vol.2 p.168.
63. Maruyama p.72.
64. Kuriyama p.25.

65. Kuriyama p.24.
66. Ibid. p.27.
67. Maruyama p.132.
68. Comp.Works vol.2 p.114. Kyōwa Kuchō.
69. Maruyama p.72.
70. Ibid. p.72.
71. Ibid. p.73.
72. The Japanese, by E.O.Reischauer, Tuttle Press 1977. p.213-214.
73. History of Japanese Religion, by Masaharu Anesaki, Tuttle Press, 1963. p.69-70.
74. This is a personal observation based on 17 years of pastoral work with the Christian church, mainly in Shiga prefecture.
75. Comp.Works vol.2 p.91.
76. Issa is either looking out over his own drawn up knees, a posture that indicates that no one else is in the room, or looking down on his knees while in a kneeling position, an attitude of loneliness and despondency.
77. Comp.Works vol.2 p.124. Kyōwa Kuchō.
78. Ibid. p.150.
79. Ibid. p.110.
80. Ito p.34. See also Kenkyūsha Dictionary p.760.
81. Comp.Works vol.2 p.129. Kyōwa Kuchō.
82. Ito p.33-34.
83. Comp.Works vol.2 p.147.
84. Kobayashi Issa to Shimosa no Haijintachi. Sugiya Tokuzō. Akatsukiin Shokan, 1981. p.8.
85. Comp.Works vol.6 p.219.
86. Ibid. p.189-204.
87. Ibid. p.226-238.
88. Ibid. p.226.
89. Buson: Issa, Koten vol.32. p.463.
90. Ibid. p.463-464.
91. Maruyama p.49.
92. Comp.Works vol.2 p.125.
93. Buson: Issa, Nihon Bungaku Kenkyū Shiryō Sōsho. p.274.
94. Ibid. p.283.

95. Buson: Issa, Koten vol.32. p.464-465.
96. Ibid. p.464.
97. Ibid. p.465.

Section 3. THE BUNKA PERIOD. First Half. 1804 - 1808.

Selected Translations.

(a). The Bunka Kuchō.

This collection of verses covers the period from Bunka 1st. year (Jan. 1804) until Bunka 5th. year (May 1808). It contains about 2500 verses, all but 60 of which are by Issa. There are a number of short prose pieces interspersed between verses, often giving the background to the verse or verses following the prose. Because of this and the greater amount of incidental material in this collection a much closer relationship between Issa's daily life and his poetry can be established in comparison to previous works of his. Issa was 41 years old when he began this work. The year 1804 was begun as the 4th. year of the Kyōwa period but changed to the 1st. year of the Bunka period from the 11th. of February¹.

Selected Translation.

BUNKA 1st year. (1804)

3.1. Manzai no makari ideta yo oyakozure.

Look, they have come!

Two strolling comic singers,

Mother and child.

3.2. Waga io no bimbō ume saki ni kerī.

At my dwelling

The poverty stricken plum blossoms

Flower.

- 3.3. Harusame ya haya hi toboru Matsuchi yama.^{1a}
 Spring rains.
 Lamps glow early
 On Matsuchi hill.
- 3.4. Harusame ya hi mo omoshiroki nabe no shiri.
 Spring rains.
 How interestingly the flames reflect
 On the bottom of the pot.
- 3.5. Uso uso to ame furu naka o haru no chō.
 As if searching, it flies
 Through the falling rain,
 The spring butterfly.
- 3.6. Atafuta no chō no deru hi ya kane no ban.
 Today
 When the butterflies
 Gaily flutter,
 There's a man sitting in his counting house!
- 3.7. Hatsu chō no ikioi mō ni² miyuru kana.
 It appears
 So fiercely vigorous,
 The first butterfly of spring.
- 3.8. Hito yori mo asa kigen nari kaeru kari.
 Feeling better in the morning
 Than we men,
 Wild geese returning.
- 3.9. Aburabi no utsukushiki yo ya naku kaeru.
 This night
 The oil lamps look so beautiful
 And the frogs croak.

- 3.10. Katsushika ya doko ni sunde mo hototogisu.
 In Katsushika
 No matter where you live
 You hear the cuckoo.
- 3.11. Wakagusa ya taga mi no ue no yū keburī.³
 Fresh grasses.
 Over whom does it rise,
 The smoke at eventide?
- 3.12. Hanasumire bin nai kusa mo hojiraruru.
 Violets,
 Other poor little wild plants too,
 Pulled up and thrown away.
- 3.13. Haru no hi ya mizu sae areba kure nokori.
 Spring days
 If beside water
 Are longer still.
- 3.14. Mata tsuchi ni narisokonōte hana no haru.
 Not yet returned to dust
 I see again
 The springtime and its blossoms.
- 3.15. Suzume ko mo ume ni kuchi aku nembutsu kana.
 The little sparrows,
 Do they, too
 View the plum blossoms
 Mouths open wide
 With prayers to the Buddha?
- 3.16. Kasumi yuku ya futa oya motashi kosuge kasa.
 Into the mists
 Recedes the wicker hat
 Of one who has two parents.

- 3.17. Kodaraï no nukiso wa aoshi haru no kaze.
 The woven bamboo cover
 On the little wooden washing bowl
 How green it is.
 Spring breezes.
- 3.18. Jiguruma ni oppishigareshi sumire kana.
 Squashed flat
 By the heavy four-wheeled cart,
 Violets.
- 3.19. Haru kaze ya kogane hana saku mutsu⁴ no yama⁵.
 Spring breezes.
 Fields abloom with golden flowers,
 The mountains of Mutsu.
- 3.20. Fukubiki mo nosabari detari momo no hana.
 Out he comes, too,
 With heavy dignity
 The toad!
 Peach blossoms.
- 3.21. Oya sato e mizu wa nagaruru harube kana.
 The water flows
 Towards my home-town
 Through the spring countryside.
- 3.22. Gyōgyōshi doko ga kasai⁶ no yukidomari.
 Reed warbler,
 Where, oh where does it end!?
 The Kasai region.
- 3.23. Hatsu hatsu ni matsushima miete gyōgyōshi.
 Reed warbler,
 Far, far off in the distance
 You can see Matsushima.

- 3.24. Kakitsubata hikui hana nimo kaze no fuku.
 Irises.
 Among even the short ones
 The wind blows.
- 3.25. Sabishisa ni kakigara fuminu hanautsugi.
 In my loneliness
 Underfoot I crunch
 The empty oyster shells.
 Little sunflowers.
- 3.26. U no hana sō no mane suru kodomotachi.
 Deutzia flowers,
 Children use them
 To play at funerals.
- 3.27. Aku oke no chō no kigen ya ko shita yami.
 On the wooden pail
 Full of blackened ash water⁷
 A butterfly at ease
 Under the shade of the trees.
- 3.28. Hiyashi uri futsuka tатtemo dare mo konu.
 With the melon chilled
 Two days have passed
 But no one has come to visit me.
- 3.29. Sōjō ga noguso asobasu higasa kana.
 The chief priest
 Relieving himself in the field,
 Parasols.⁸
- 3.30. Funaita ni suzukaze fukedo hidarasa yo.
 The cool breeze
 Blows in through the boards of the ship
 But I am, Oh! so hungry.

- 3.31. Akitatsu ya mi wa narawashi no yoso mado.
 Autumn arrives
 While I spend my days
 Living off my haiku verses
 In the homes of others.
- 3.32. Waga hoshi wa kazusa no sora o urotsuku ka.
 Does my star
 Wander around the sky
 Over Kazusa?
- 3.33. Urotaena samuku narutote akatombo.
 "Do not be confused,
 It will become colder!"
 Red dragonfly.
- 3.34. Aki no kaze ware ga mairu wa done jigoku⁹
 The autumn wind.
 "Which hell is it
 That I am heading for?"
- 3.35. Aki no kaze kojiki wa ware o mikuraburu.
 The autumn wind.
 Looking at me
 The beggar
 Compares himself!
- 3.36. Nake uzura jama nara oi o tatamu beki.
 Sing out quail!
 If my dwelling is a hindrance to you
 I will fold it up!
- 3.37. Sawattemo shigure sō nari chichibuyama.
 Looking as though late autumn rains
 Would start to fall the very moment
 I just but touched it,

10
Mount Chichibu.

3.38. Sono kusa wa mushiri nokosu zo kirigirisu.

Mr. Grasshopper,

I will leave unplucked

The plant you are sitting on!

3.39. Ina koki no aite gamashiku ahiru kana.

Standing there

As if prepared

To take on the thresher in the field,

A duck!

3.40. Uedomo no asobi ariku ya kiku no hana.¹¹

The fishes play

Among the chrysanthemum flowers

Floating in the water.

3.41. Yûtsuki ya nagare nokori no kirigirisu.

The evening moon.

Listen! a grasshopper

That was not washed away!

Sept 3rd.

In Hakoshinda¹² there was , at the home of a man named Hanzaemon, a frail old man. To help him prepare his noon meal he built himself a little fire which, blown fiercely by a south wind, soon had the smoke and flames rising above the wood and bamboo house.

The old man raised his voice and shouted for help but the other members of the family were all far off in the fields and because it was an unusually fine autumn day there was hardly anyone at all in the village and so the house was

soon well ablaze.

When the wife of the household returned the dwelling was completely gone. Yesterday they had seen the suffering of others because of the floods and now the tragedy of a fire had come upon themselves. Of a truth the pleasures of this world are but for a moment. The goods and belongings amassed during ten years of toil were all turned to ashes in a moment. How we all should stand in awe of such things!

3.42. Yake ishi ya yo samuku mieshi hito no kao.

The charred stones.

But how cold they look this evening,

The peoples faces.

3.43. Yake ishi ni koshi uchikakete aki no sora.

Sitting

Upon the charred stones

Under the autumn sky.

--//--

3.44. Fukugawa no yajiri mo miete asa samuki.

Along the bank

Of the deep flowing river

The backs of the houses

In the morning coldness.

3.45. Surikogi mo keshiki ni narabu yo naga kana.

Standing there

Also part of the scene,

A wooden pestle

In the long night.

3.46. Kimi ga yo ya kakaru kokage mo bakuchi kana.

The emperor reigns

And in the shade
Of the overhanging branches,
Gambling.

- 3.47. Tayasuku mo kiku no saki keru kawa no fuchi.
How easily they grow,
The chrysanthemums
By the river bank.
- 3.48. Nara no ha no asa kara chiru ya tōfu bune.
From early morning
Oak leaves fall
Into the beancurd trough.
- 3.49. Kogarashi ya chibita ni kururu tsuji utai.
Cold wintry winds.
At eventide, upon the open ground
The poor street singer lies.
- 3.50. Yoru yoru wa shinjo no shita mo kare no kana.
Night after night
The place I sleep upon
Is also withered moor.
- 3.51. No wa karete nanzo kuitaki iori kana.
The fields have withered,
How I would just love something to eat
In my humble dwelling.
- 3.52. Nahajimeru sono yo o take no shigure kana.
Tonight
Sleeping here for the first time
I hear
The shower upon the bamboo plants.
- 3.53. Yū ame o naki idashitari misosazai.

Singing out

Into the evening downpour

A wren.

- 3.54. Hatsu yuki ya asu no keburu no wara ichi wa.¹³

First fall of snow.

One handful of straw

Will be tomorrow's smoke.

- 3.55. Kogarashi ya konniyaku oke no hoshi tsuki yo.¹⁴

Cold wintry wind.

In the 'konniyaku' pail

The moon and stars at night.

- 3.56. Kogarashi ya komizo ni keburu takebibashi.

Cold wintry wind.

Smoking in the little drainage ditch,

Bamboo fire-tongs.

- 3.57. Misosazai chitto iutemo hi no kururu.

Jenny Wren,

Even though you cry "Chi chi",

The day will draw in.

- 3.58. Kuru mo kuru mo heta uguisu yo made no ume.

One after another they come

To the plum blossoms at my window

Nightingales

With poor voices!

- 3.59. Uguisu mo modorigake ka yo ore ga mado.

Nightingale at my window

Are you just on your way home

After visiting somewhere else?

- 3.60. Shinkoku no matsu o itoname oroshiyabune.

Russian boat,
 Array yourself
 With pine decorations
 From the Land of The Gods.

3.61. Haru kaze no kuni ni ayakare oroshiyabune.

Russian boat!
 Come share the blessings
 Of the Land of Spring Breezes!

3.62. Kado no matsu oroshiya ebisu no tamagebeshi.

New Year pine decorations.
 The foreigners from Russia
 Stand astonished!

3.63. Nippon no toshi ga oshiika oroshiyajin.

More years in Japan,
 Is this what you yearn for,
 O men of Russia?

3.64. Haru tatsu ya yonjūsannen hito no meshi.

Spring is here!
 Forty three years
 Eating other people's rice!

3.65. Toshi no ichi nani shi ni deta to hito no iu.

The year-end market,
 "What on earth has he come here for?"
 People say.

3.66. Hito nami ni deru mane shitari toshi no ichi.

Pretending to be
 Just like everybody else,
 I set out
 For the year-end market.

3.67. Ume ga ka ya donata kite mo kake chawan.

Fragrance of plum blossom.

No matter who should come,

Cracked tea-cups!

December 26th.

Clear skies. The high priest of the Enkaku temple¹⁵ was made a public disgrace for two days at Nihon-bashi.¹⁶

Even though it is said that he who does not understand the feelings between men and women^{17^a} is sadly lacking, men who have no sensual desires are an extremely rare breed!

In the past, one priest was attracted to the princess Somedono,^{17^b} while another fell down from the clouds while admiring the lady doing her washing in a stream,¹⁸ It seems it is difficult even for the highest ranking priests and those who live far above the common world of mere ordinary men, not to follow this path.

The high priest broke the buddhist laws and rules applying to one of his high rank and fell into sin. He was made into such a painful public spectacle that even those from other parts of the land felt pity for him.

3.68. Yukijiru no kakaru chibita ni oshōgan.

Splattered with snowy slush,

Close to the ground

The high priest's face.

--//--

3.69. Sabishisa wa tokushin shite mo mado no shimo.

Though well aware

That I would be lonely,

Frost at my window.

BUNKA 2nd year. 1805.

3.70. Kakenabe mo asahi sasu nari kore mo haru.

The morning sun shines in
Upon the chipped and broken pot.
This, too, is my New Year!

3.71. Waga haru ya tadon hitotsu ni kona ichiwa.

My New Year.
One piece of charcoal
And a handful of little herbs!

3.72. Kasumu hi ya yūyama kage no ame no fue.

A hazy spring day,
From the shadows of the mountains at eventide
The sound of the sweetseller's flute.

3.73. Hito oni ga noyama ni sumu zo sudachi tori.

Devilish men
Live in the mountains
And on the moors,
O little bird just left the nest.

3.74. Sono yo kara ame ni aikeri sudachi tori.

In the evening
Of the first day you leave the nest
You will meet the rain
Little bird.

3.75. Kusakage ni butsukusanukasu kawazu kana.

In the shade of the grasses
Creaking complaints,
A frog.

3.76. Ume saku ya miru kage mo naku ono ga ie.

Plum blossoms

Around the pitiful wretchedness
Of my dwelling.

3.77. Kusa no ha ya tsubame kisomete utsukushiki.

Fresh green shoots,
And the swallows are here.
How beautiful.

3.78. Haru no tsuki sawaraba shizukutarinubeshi.

The spring moon.
If I were to touch it
It would surely drip down
Upon us!

3.79. Naku kaeru kono yo mugura mo nobinubeshi.

The croaking frogs.
Tonight the goose grass, too,
Will surely grow taller.

3.80. Saru mo keyo momotaru¹⁹ mo keyo kusa no mochi.

Come monkey,
Come Momotaru,
Rice cakes with herbs!

3.81. Kaiwai no kuchisugi ni naru sakura kana.

In this neighborhood
They become a means of livelihood,
Cherry blossoms.

3.82. Chiru hana o he tomo omowanu mikao kana.²⁰

An honorable face
That couldn't give a fart
For the falling cherry blossoms.

3.83. Nanizakura ka sakura zen no yo nari keri.

"What kind of cherry blossom is it?"

In a world

Where cherry blossoms are used

For making money!

3.84. Yamatoji wa otoko mosu nari cha tsumi uta.

On the roads of Japan,

Where men, too, are heard

Singing the tea-pickers' songs.

3.85. Hego uchiwa sha ni kamaetaru hitori kana.

Sitting

Holding the fan obliquely,

Alone.

3.86. Katatsumuri kimakase ni seyo kusa no ie.

Mr. Snail,

Just do as you please

In your home among the grasses!

3.87. Kō nereba hitogamashii zo oa sudare.

Ah! sleeping like this

Is more like a human being should!

Green bamboo screens.

3.88. Mi hitotsu ya shinaba sudare no ao uchi.

I only have myself,

Thus, if I am to die

Let it be amidst these bamboo screens!

3.89. Samidare ni oppishigetaru sumai kana.

Flattened

By the spring rains,

A little house.

3.90. Itabe ni hana no tsukaeru suzumi kana.²¹

The wooden fence

Nearly blocks up my nose!

The evening coolness.

- 3.91. Waga yado no bimbō tsuta mo momiji kana.

At my dwelling

On the poor and miserable looking ivy

The leaves have reddened.

- 3.92. Kikitsutsuki no shine tote tataku hashira

The woodpecker kana.

Tapping out

"Die die"

Upon the wooden post!

- 3.93. Akikaze ya ie sae motanu ō otoko.

The autumn wind.

Not having even a house of his own,

Fine figure of a man indeed!

- 3.94. Teshiyori ya tsuki o miru ni mo namu amida.

The old man

Even while viewing the moon repeats,

"Save us merciful Buddha".

- 3.95. Sumi kudaku te no sabishisa yo kabososa²² yo.

Ah, the loneliness,

Ah, the thinness

Of the hands

That break the charcoal into little pieces.

- 3.96. Shimoyoke no tashi ni tachitaru jizō kana.

Standing there

Helping to keep the frost away,

Little wayside idol.

- 3.97. Jittoshite yuki o furasu ya maki no uma.

Motionless

Simply letting the snow fall,

The horse in the pasture.

- 3.98. Karigamo no inochi motsu ma naki ni keru.

The wild ducks,
While they have life
Cackle and quack.

- 3.99. Omukai no kumo o matsu mi mo sakura kana.

He, too, who waits
For the clouds which come
To take him to the unseen world,
Views the cherry blossoms.

- 3.100. Ume saku ya sanmon fue mo ne o dashite.

The plum trees blossom
To the sound of the notes
From a threepenny whistle.

- 3.101. Yasu yabu mo ore ga yo nari naku kaeru.

In the withered copse,
"This is my world",
Croaks the frog.

- 3.102. Tagayasanu tsumi mo ikubaku toshi no kure.

How great is it now?
The sin of having never tilled the land.
The year draws in.

- 3.103. Kuchi akete haru o matsuran inu hariko.

Mouth agape
As if waiting for the New Year to arrive,
The little paper maché dog.

- 3.104. Yoru no yuki damatte tōru hito mo ari.

Snow falls at eventide,
Some who pass by
Do so silently.

3.105. Shinibeta to yama ya omowan yū shigure.

"He is slow in dying",

Does the mountain think so, too?

Evening showers.

3.106. Mochi no deru tsuchi ga hoshisa yo toshi no

Ah, the yearning kure.

For a magic, rice-cake producing mallet²³!

As the year draws in.

3.107. Nera neko mo tsuma kasegi suru yo nari keru.

The stray cat too

Out looking for a wife

This evening.

BUNKA 3rd. year. 1806.

1st. January

Although I am cursed as a wastrel by the
successful of this world there is nothing I can do
about it!

3.108. Mata kotoshi shabafusagi zo yo kusa no ie.

This year, too,

I, the useless good-for-nothing,

Will still be around!

Little thatched hut.

On being invited to the house next door;

3.109. Kimi ga yo ya yose zen nite hana no haru.

The emperor reigns!

At the table

Of the house next door

The New Year blossoms!

- 3.110. Kagerō ya ka no waku yabu mo utsukushiki.
 In the spring haze
 Swarming above the shrubbery
 The mosquitoes, too,
 Look beautiful!
- 3.111. Hito yosanu sakura saki ni kerī shiro no
 Where none can approach, yama.
 Flowering cherry blossoms
 On the side of the castled mountain.
- 3.112. Harugasumi kuwa toranu mi no mettaina.
 Spring mists.
 What a wastrel is he
 Who never holds the hoe!
- 3.113. Yuku wa yuku wa edo mita kari ga mita kari ga.
 There they go,
 There they go,
 The wild ducks which have seen Edo,
 Which have seen Edo!
- 3.114. ²⁴Gokutsubushi sakura no shita ni kurashi :
 The rice devourer keri.
 Spends his days
 In the shade of the cherry blossoms.
- 3.115. Kusa haete sanjaku dana mo kasumi kerī.
 The grasses grow,
 The wayside stall
 Though three feet tall
 Cannot be clearly seen at all.
- 3.116. Kankodori shinano no sakura saki ni kerī.
 The cuckoo cries
 And the cherry blossoms of Shinano

Bloom.

3.117. Hocha hochu to yabu asagao no saki ni keri.

Softly softly

Among the shrubbery,

Morning glory.

3.118. Aki tatsu ya mine no kogara no kado naruru.

Autumn arrives

The marsh-tits from the mountains

Frequent my gate.

3.119. Shiratsuyu to shirade fue fuku tonari kana.

Unaware of the early dewdrops

The next-door neighbor

Plays his flute.

A little time after a fire had ravaged the Shitaya²⁵
district of Edo;

3.120. Asagao no shitaya semashi to saki ni keri.

As they bloom

They make Shitaya seem so narrow,

Morning glory.

3.121. Saitari na dono asagao mo ie no ato.

How they bloom!

All the morning glories

Where houses once stood.

3.122. Yakegui . wa haya aki kaze yo kusa no hana.

Already the autumn wind

Blows among the charred posts

The weeds and wild flowers.

After a fire in the Aomono district in Edo.

3.123. Yakegui o nobashite mitari aki no kaze.

Looking at

The charred posts layed out

In the autumn wind.

3.124. Aki kaze no asa kara fuku ya yake kawara.

The autumn wind

From early morning blows

Among the charred roof tiles.

--//--

After a blind masseur was lanced to death on the Edo streets for no apparent reason;

3.125. Ima ni miye hito toru hito mo kusa no tsuyu.

Look now and behold!

He who takes another's life

Will himself become

Just dew upon the grasses.

--//--

3.126. Kane kōru yama o ushiro ni netari keru.

With the mountain,

Cold enough to freeze the temple bell,

Behind me,

I sleep.

3.127. Hatsu shimo ya kuki no hagire mo kyōnen made.

First winter frost.

Last fragments of my teeth

Lasted only

Up to this year.

3.128. Yuki chiru ya waga yado ni neru wa asu atari.

Snow flutters down,
 In my own dwelling I will sleep,
 Sometime tomorrow.

3.129. Hazukashiya kute nete kiku kan nembutsu.

How it shames me,
 Eating, sleeping,
 Listening to others
 Chant Buddhist prayers
 Outside in the winter coldness..

BUNKA 4th. year. 1807.

3.130. Hatsu haru ya keburu tateru mo sekken muki.²⁷

New Year.
 Making smoke rise up the chimney
 For the sake of others!

3.131. Ura kado no hitori de ni aku hi naga kana.

The back door
 Swings open by itself,
 How so very long a day it is.

3.132. Furusato ya mochi no tsukikomu haru no yuki.

The old home town.
 Driven by the wind
 Into the hot pounded rice,
 New year's snow.

3.133. Haru kaze ni hashi o tsukande neru ko kana.

Spring breezes.
 Clasping her chopsticks
 The child sleeps.

3.134. Baba ga mochi jiji ga sakura saki ni keri.

The old lady makes rice cakes,

The old man's cherry tree

Blossoms.

3.135. Yūtsubame ware niwa asu no ate mo naku.

Swallows at eventide,

As for me, no hope

For tomorrow.

3.136. Yūgaeru mugura no ame ni oi o naku.

The frog at eventide

In the rain, among the goose-grass,

Groaks

At his aging!

3.137. Su no tori ya hito ga tattemo kuchi o aku.

Little birds in the nest,

Though even a man stands before them,

Open their mouths!

3.138. Hana ono ono nippondamashii isamashi ya.

The flowers

Each and every one,

With the spirit of Japan,

Bloom courageously.

3.139. Yabu no hachi konyo mo ware ni ayakaru na.

Bees in the shrubbery

When you are reborn again

Next time, too,

Don't be like me!

3.140. Akebone no sora iro koromo kae ni keru.

The sky at daybreak

Changes dress

To funeral colours. 28

- 3.141. Awase kiru tabi ni toshi yoru to omou kana.
 Each time afresh I put²⁹
 The lined kimono on
 I think how one year older
 I have become!
- 3.142. Edo jimanu kinō shitawashi koromogae.
 I change my garments,
 Garments not yet at home in Edo,
 Garments which till yesterday
 I had grown accustomed to.
- 3.143. Te no shiwa ga ayumi warui ka hatsu hotaru.
 The wrinkles on my hand,
 Is it difficult to walk over them?
 First firefly of the year.
- 3.144. Hototogisu yoru wa mugura mo utsukushii.³⁰
 The cuckoo calls.
 The goose-grass at night
 Is also beautiful.
- 3.145. Mimizuku no tawainaku neru shigure kana.
 The horned owl
 Sits amusingly
 Asleep.
 Late autumn showers.
- 3.146. Ware tomo ni kaeba urō zo hagobusuma.
 If I could but buy a new one
 I, too, would sell
 My worn old quilt!
- 3.147. Yuki no hi ya furusatobito mo buashirai.
 A snowy day.
 I am chilled, too,

By those of my old home town!

3.148. Kokoro kara shinano no yuki ni furare keru.

As if to turn me back,

Falling,

Falling upon me with all its might!

Shinano snow.

3.149. Uguisu mo hitoyo koyo yare kamibusuma.³¹

Nightingale,

For just one night

Please come.

Paper quilts.

3.150. Waga tsuka mo yagate tanomu zo hachitataki.

At my grave, too,

By and by

I'll be asking for your services,

Travelling priest.

3.151. Toshi no kure kame wa itsu made tsurasaruru.³²

The year draws in.

For how much longer

Will the turtles be fished?

BUNKA 5th. year. 1808.

3.152. Aratama mo toshi tachi kaeru shirami kana.

Old year out,

New year in,

The old lice too

Make way for the new!

3.153. Ume saku ya aware kotoshi mo morai mochi.

The plum tree blossoms.

Ah! the wretchedness,

This year, too,

I'm eating rice-cakes received from others!

3.154. Wakagusa ya ware to susume to asobu hodo.

Fresh green grasses,

Just enough

For the sparrows and I

To play.

3.155. Ware o mite nigai kao suru kaeru kana.

Staring at me

Bitter look upon his face,

A frog!

3.156. Kagerō ya kinō nakitaru tanishigara.

Spring haze.

Yesterday the pond-snail cried,

For there's his empty shell.

3.157.

How I envy the flower called the 'pheasant's eye'³³ for the way people take such good care of it. I, too, bought one and planted it, but what is this!? Instead of blooming a rich yellow like the mountain rose, it has a colour more like the oily wick of a lamp! It is said that the mandarin orange blossoms of Edo change to trivoliolate orange blossoms if they are transplanted farther north. They adapt themselves to their surroundings it is said. In like manner perhaps the flowers and plants change depending upon who looks after them! This might be what happened to my flower. It has lost its natural beauty upon being brought to

my 'poverty stricken dwelling place. As a joke I
have changed the flower's name.

3.157. Yabunami ya 'binbōgusa' mo hana no hara.

Among the shrubs before the houses
The 'Poverty-stricken Flower', too,
Joins the spring blooms.

3.158. Binbōgusa medetaki haru ni ai ni keru.

The 'Poverty-stricken Flower', too,
Comes out to meet
The happy springtime.

--//--

3.159. Tamagoto mo kojiki no fue mo kasumi keru.

The beautiful harp,
The beggar's flute,
Both fade
Like the mists.

3.160. Su tsubame ya nani o tsubuyaku kokuragari.

Little swallows
What are you complaining about
In the tiny darkness
Of your little nest?

3.161. Iza saraba shini keiko sen hana no kage.³⁴

Time to go now,
Off to practice dying.
In the shade of the cherry blossoms.

3.162. Hana saku ya me o nuwaretaru tori no naku.³⁵

The cherry blossoms bloom.
The birds,
Their eyes sown shut,
Cry out.

3.163. Shira uo no dotto amaruru oboro kana.

The ice-fish

Suddenly are there,

Hatched all at once

Beneath the hazy moon.

3.164. Yūgao no hana medetamae kōkagami.

God of the water-closet!

Look with delight upon

The moon-flowers around you!

3.165. Haeuchi ni tatakare tamau hotoke kana.

Be struck

As I swat the fly upon you

Honorable Buddha!

3.166. Take no ko ya nikumare kusa mo nobi jitaku.

The bamboo shoots,

The hateful weeds, too,

Prepare to sprout up.

3.167. Utsukushiki hana no naka yori yabu ka kana.

From among

The beautiful flowers,

Striped mosquitoes!

(b). Kubun. The Collapse of the Eidai Bridge. (1807)

Translation.

The abundance of this region is such as to make it the envy of people from all over the land. The rice husks are scattered like blossom all around and in the bamboo copses the sparrows make merry as they chirp the praises of this age, while the strolling comic minstrels dance with laughing faces at the gates of the houses.

The breeze from the pine clad mountains whispers the praises of a well ordered world, the fresh moss upon the rocks grows greener and fresher still and the hearts of the people here are somehow like the flowers.

It was on the 19th. of the moon viewing month (Sept.), at the time of the festival of the Tomigaoka³⁶ Hachiman shrine. The poor, dressed in their best clothes were every bit the equal of the rich in the beauty of their attire as both rich and poor alike made their way, under the unusually beautiful blue skies, the elderly leading and the children carried in the arms of their parents, to celebrate and worship at the shrine. But what an evil day it was to be. The Eidai bridge, creaking and groaning, broke asunder just half way across and like balls rolling down a slope the people fell one on top of the other and in no time at all were like sand under the waves of the river beneath.

Who would have thought that the kimonos of the rich, perfumed to delight the heart, their jewel encrusted

ornamental combs outshining in their brilliance the very moon itself, would be this day their ceremonial funeral attire as they set out upon their journey unto death. Was not this day, in its entirety, committed with sincerity to the will of the gods?

Even though I am some 240 kilometres away and have only heard this news by word of mouth as if carried upon the wind, it makes me cold all over just to think of it! Ah indeed, if it were not the year of the seventh anniversary of my father's death I, too, would have been among them and would even now no doubt be drifting with them under the full and rolling waters only to become food for the fishes. Could it be that even I am protected by the Buddhas!?

3.168. Aki no kaze mo ni naku mushi no ikusobaku.

How many will there be,
Crying insects in the duckweed
In the autumn wind?

(c). Kubun. Konpira Otsuru. (1808)

The title of this extract translates into English as
'The Woman Named Otsuru of the Konpira³⁷ Shrine'.

Translation.

'The Woman Named Otsuru of the Konpira Shrine of Kawana^{38^a}'.

Numerous red and white banners waving wildly in the wind, flower patterns on green parasols, the tinkle and thump of the little drums and bells, a permit issued by prince Shirakawa^{38^b} held high aloft attached to a bamboo pole, along the procession went, adding its colour to the brocade of autumn hues which was its background.

Upon asking a villager if this all meant that some kind of ceremony was to take place, I was informed that indeed there was and it was to be held at the house of a man named Haneimon, a farmer. Tonight, at his request, a religious rite of the Konpira shrine would take place at his house.

Seated on a high platform was a woman around forty years of age. She may have been a beauty in years gone by but now she was indeed past her prime! She wore a white cotton kimono and her hair was like dishevelled pampasgrass. Her face was as red as a jujube berry. Her wide eyes were bright and burned like a she-devil's as in a chanting voice she intoned her spells.

She seemed to look down condescendingly upon the gathered crowd as if they were mere flies or mosquitoes. I wondered how any evil or malevolent influence could with-

stand her presence! Was she indeed some brave and pious woman or was it because somewhere some malevolent little devil was angry with her and had made her like she was? As I looked I wondered what would come to pass both in her and through her.

3.169. Bara no hana mushimake sae mo nakari keri.³⁹

Unspoiled!

Not even by the insects,

The thorny flower!

(d). Kubun. A Thorny Flower. (1808).

Translation.

The prominent landowner named Kisaemon⁴⁰, whom I thought to be utterly dependable has tricked me out of my copy of my father's will. I feel like a fish which has been taken out of the water, or a blind man without his staff. Like one who leaves the tree he had chosen for shelter when it no longer keeps the rain off, and having nowhere to stay the night, even though I had travelled two hundred and forty kilometres to be here, I visited father's grave and then set out immediately from there upon my two hundred and forty kilometre journey back to Edo.

3.170. Furusato ya yoru mo sawaru mo bara no hana.

The old home town,

To touch it,

Even to draw near to it,

A thorny flower. Issa the step-son.

(e). Kuhun. A Record of My Cherry Blossom Viewing. (1808).

Introduction.

Written in the year Bunka period 5th. year this short work, 'Hanami no Ki' is the record of Issa's excursions to view the cherry blossoms in the spring of that year. It contains just twenty four verses by Issa interspersed between three short pieces of prose. Seven of Issa's verses and approximately half the prose is translated here.

Translation.

To both the east and the west the cherry blossoms fall and scatter. On the twentieth of March I felt within me that I, too, should go to view them.

3.171. Susukusaki kasa mo sakura no furu hi kana.

Though smelling of soot^{41.}

I take down my wicker hat

This day

When cherry blossom petals fall and scatter.

Many people have gathered at the Yamashita Jōraku temple⁴² where memorial services on what was said to be the 1100th. anniversary of the revered Buddhist image worshipped there, were being held, and where, as part of the services, the Buddhist scriptures were being chanted aloud with great earnestness.

That even one as ignorant and unworthy as I who in the previous existence had had the blessing of being elected to be born a man and thus in this life have the opportun-

ity filled me with joy and for a little while I wiped away my tears of gratitude.

Roku amida kakete nakaran uguisu.

From among

The six Amida Buddhas

The nightingale sings out.

This verse by the great Kikaku⁴³ must have been written at a time like this. This very verse tells of a time now many hundreds of years in the past and this day, too, in which I speak will eventually become a day in times gone by. As for me I have no home at which besides the eaves of which the plum tree blooms, thus to remember me each year when I have passed into the next life.⁴⁴ I beg of you then, O Buddha, do not abandon me.

3.172. Hana oke no chō mo kiku ka yo ichidaiji.

On the flower pail

Are you listening, too,

Little butterfly

To the chants ascending at this great event?

The drooping willow-like cherry trees of the Kiyomizu⁴⁵ temple at Ueno have shed their blossoms and are now bedecked with fresh green leaves which in the breeze brush my face as I stroll by at my leisure. It has been said that the blossoms are lovely because they fall and scatter,⁴⁶ and indeed this is so but there are many who come after they have fallen to view them who can only stand and murmur, "How impatient of the blossoms to thus have fallen and scattered", as they walk upon the raised

platform at the temple, sad that the blossoms are almost gone.

From yesterday I had arranged with Masami, a neighbor, to go with him but something has hindered him and he is unable to come. Having no certainty of life tomorrow I decided to come by myself today. Happily I have with me a copy of the 'Gogenshū' and that will be for me a partner in verse as I view the cherry blossoms.

Kobōzu ya matsu ni kakurete yamazakura.

The temple boy

Hides among the pines.

Mountain cherry blossoms. Kikaku.

3.173.. Kobōzu ya oya no tomo shite yamazakura.⁴⁷

The temple boy

Together with his parent.

Mountain cherry blossoms. Issa.

Imitating the priest Yoshida⁴⁸ who wrote, "With a friend from the unseen world", I think of Kikaku as my elder brother and feel I view the cerry blossoms with him as my companion. Thus this day brings me much pleasure.

Feeling it a lack of taste on my part for not having gone to see the cherry blossoms written about by the poet⁴⁹ Shūshiki, I have instead come to stroll around at this place. The fallen blossoms scatter here and there and the scene before me is one of springtime drawing to a close. Of itself such a scene is sad enough, but from among the trees the temple bell sounds forth the transience of all things and gradually I feel cold shivers

running up my spine.

While I was thus wandering along and talking to myself of days gone by there came, from where I do not know, an old woman whose hair was like bunches of lamp-wick and whose complexion was like that of a withered windswept tree grown old! Resting her chin upon her walking stick she said to herself, "This will be the last cherryblossom viewing for me", as if reciting something to herself in a pleasant manner.

Was she the final apparition of the harlot of Eguchi⁵⁰ or could she be a re-appearance of the old woman of Higaki,⁵¹ for in an uncanny way she made verses that linked with those that I was murmuring to myself!?

Furuzakura hana no yaku tote saki ni keru
itadaku oke no haru no yūgure.

The old cherry tree

Saying, "I, too, am here to bear blossoms",

Blooms

And the wooden pail

Receives the falling petals

At eventide in spring. The old woman.

⁵²
Ashibiki no yama uguisu ni yadokashite.

And to the poor nightingale

From yonder mountains

Affords a dwelling. The old woman's companion.

Having thus recited their verses the two old ladies said, "Let us meet at the Sumida river", and went their homeward way.

I, a man, have never known such familiarity even

among men! Indeed it was just as the Chinese poem says,
 "Under the tall and stately pine two common people at
 each other scowl"⁵³. Verses of poetry are good or bad
 depending upon the time and place. Even so I here pay
 tribute to the women's spirit, for I admired their cheek!

Remembering that last year at the Jōkō Hall⁵⁴ there had
 lived a villain who injured another man with a lance,
 even though it is a beautiful building, I felt fearful
 and so with a swift bow of reverence I passed it by
 quickly. There stood nearby, a very old tree around
 which was a fence which had been built to keep people
 away from it. It was said that at night the goblins
 used this enclosure for a place to dance.

3.175. Tatari nasu sugi wa futorite chiru sakura.

An evil spell upon it
 The cedar grows fatter
 As cherry blossoms fall.

Thinking I would slake my thirst I strolled under a
 trellis⁵⁵ from which wisteria hung. Awa and Kazusa could⁵⁶
 be seen in the far off misty distance, a beautiful
 mountain view. Below me in the town here and there the
 woven baskets and wicker boxes raised up on poles from
 the 8th. of February to mark the beginning of work after
 the New Year⁵⁷, had grown old and being still there looked
 odd, as if waiting for the coming autumn showers to fall
 upon them! The cloth weather-vane streamers flapped
 wildly in the spring breeze and the numerous fire look-
 out towers, rising up towards the clouds, seemed to have

a sense of liveliness all their own.

Mention is made of springtime in the old Chōan era⁵⁸
as being glorious but each and every one who sees this
sight today voices the same opinion that those past days
cannot compare with the springtime in this present
prosperous and abundant period of Shogunal rule..

3.176. Chiru hana o waki ni nashite ya edobiiki.

The falling blossoms

Play second fiddle to Edo

The favourite of its citizens!

Section Three. THE BUNKA PERIOD. First Half. 1804 - 1808

The Development of Issa's Distinctive Style.

Introduction.

Issa's distinctive style develops remarkably during this period and his personality is clearly stamped upon his work as a whole. In the Kyōwa period in certain selected areas his mature style was beginning to show itself clearly but in this period the influence of his individual personality pervades all his poetry. In this period Issa moves towards his mature style particularly in the realms of the themes of loneliness, poverty, humour and in the use of colloquial language. In other areas such as his observation of everyday life and his feelings of worthlessness he progresses, but the progress is not as marked as in the aforementioned areas. His verses in which small creatures are featured become less personal and subjective and we see in Issa a breadth of spirit developing in which he views the poor and weak from a more sympathetic and objective perspective. He uses them less to speak of himself and begins to feel genuinely for them in their weakness.

Two areas in which new developments begin are verses about children and verses in which a religious element is present. These are areas, however, in which he will develop much further in later years.

Finally we see in this period that Issa is developing a much clearer philosophy of life. He moves from the gloom of the previous period to develop a humorously pessimistic

attitude towards life which enables him to see himself in a far more objective manner. The consequential development of humour as one of his major characteristics is a natural outcome of this development of his own personality and is further evidence of the deep fusion between Issa as a person and the poetry he produced.

(1). The Theme of Poverty.

Issa's expressions of his own poverty become more numerous and much bolder than those of the Kyōwa period. In the Kyōwa period his major development was in poems of loneliness and poems of poverty were relatively few, but as we move into the Bunka period poverty also becomes a very major theme of his work.

There can be no doubt that poverty was a very pressing and practical problem to Issa at this time. In his collection ⁵⁹ Bunka Kucho we find these short lines,

'If the poor man lacks discretion he will steal,
and without carefulness the weak become sick.'
April 24th. 1804.

'Rice now priced very high, firewood now priced
very high'. January 29th. 1805.

Many of his verses, too, are cries of desperation from the depths of poverty. In verse ref. 3.35 he compares himself with the beggar while verses ref. 3.51, 3.71, and 3.106 refer to the fact that he has no food to eat. Verses ref. 3.71, and 3.54 reveal that he has no winter fuel to warm himself or to cook by, while verses ref. 3.64 and 3.153 tell us that often what he does eat is given to him by

others. Other verses of this period reveal that the few everyday utensils that he does possess are either cracked, broken, or old. See verses ref. 3.70, 3.67 and 3.146.

At the yearend market Issa is there among the crowds but his presence is superfluous as he has no money to buy anything with which to celebrate the New Year. See verses ref. 3.65 and 3.66.

Many of these verses have a tinge of humour about them, and this is part of the haiku charm. The humorous aspect of these verses is only in the form of expression, the actual content of them reveals the utter sadness and weariness of his life at this time which results in his expression of hopelessness with regard to the future in verse ref. 3.135.

While there can be no doubt that these verses on poverty are from the daily experience of the poet himself, we see in this period the beginnings of a further development of this basic theme of Issa's. This new development is best seen in the verses ref. 3.2, 3.91 and 3.157. In these verses Issa uses the phrases bimbō ume, bimbō tsuta and bimbōgusa. The word bimbō, translated 'poverty stricken' is used humorously in a cynical way, as Issa views his poverty in an objective way.

Issa's use of the word bimbō is best explained by the poet himself in the prose passage that precedes verse ref. 3.157. The flower is seen as 'poverty stricken' because of its association with Issa. In these verses there is no stress, no desperation, rather just a humorously cynical way of looking at the flowers and plants

that grew around him and his dwelling. Issa is beginning to use the theme of poverty not as a realistic cry from the heart which finds its expression in haiku verse, but rather as a poetic motif, a poetic theme used for effect or just an embellishment for his poetry. The theme of poverty was to remain a major one in Issa's work up to his death. Later in his life, when he had settled down in Kashiwabara and when the hard, desperate days of want were behind him, he still produced many verses on poverty.

It was in this period that Issa began to move towards using poverty merely as a poetic theme and in doing so his verses on poverty began to lose their freshness and degenerate into reworkings of previous colloquial verses. The three verses quoted above, ref. 3.2, 3.91 and 3.157 are good examples of this. Issa's use of the word binbō in an adjectival sense to describe the plum blossoms in verse ref. 3.2 strikes the reader in a fresh and humorous way, but Issa soon begins to overwork the word and the freshness is lost. As Issa developed the poetic theme of poverty this tendency increased and resulted in the production of many very similar verses.

One aspect of Issa's poverty was the fact that he never owned a house of his own until he was over 50 years of age. In verse ref. 3.108 Issa uses the phrase kusa no ie. Since one out of every five prose pieces written by Issa is to do with the subject of a house, Issa's preoccupation with the idea of a house becomes evident, as seen for example in the piece 'A Thorny Flower'.

(ii). The Theme of Loneliness.

This theme, so dominant in the previous period and further emphasized at that time by the death of Issa's only living blood-relative, his father, continues on into this period and develops into one of the major themes of Issa's mature poetry. In this period, too, there is the occasional verse in which he expresses his sense of loneliness in relation to the loss of his father. Verse ref. 3.16 is an example of this but it lacks the force and pathos of those in a similar vein in the Kyōwa period. Issa also continues to write verses in which he reveals his longing for Kashiwabara, see verses ref. 3.21 and 3.116 in which he thinks of the river that flows to his home town, and of the cherry blossoms he imagines to be flowering there, but they are few in number and less conspicuous than verses in which he expresses his thoughts concerning Kashiwabara and those living there as a source of pain and trouble to him, see verses ref. 3.147, 3.148 and 3.170.

The basic content of his poems on the theme of loneliness comes from his everyday life. In his own dwelling, even though he has cooled a melon and saved it for a visitor, no one comes, verse ref. 3.28. He stares at the pestle, ref. 3.45, listens to others passing by, ref. 3.104, or on hot summer days just sits and looks at the back door swinging on its hinges, ref. 3.131. The same realistic depiction of loneliness was displayed in his poetry of the previous period but here it is developed further. This realistic depiction of loneliness is evident in his objective observation of the wooden tongs smoking in the ditch in the winter

bleakness and the moon and stars shining in the pail on a winter's night. He has time to notice the oak leaves that have fallen from early morning and the crow flying by, mouth agape, at the the end of a long summer's day.

There is a pathos here that comes from the real experience of the hard life of the poor city dweller. Some of his simple descriptive verses of this period are plain statements in haiku form. They have no deep meaning as such but are permeated by a sense of nothingness, a nihilism which though descriptive is also deeply subjective as the verses tell us more about the poet than they do about the object of the poem. They tell us that he has nothing to do but to observe almost any movement or any object during both the long days of late spring, poem ref. 3.131. or the cold days of winter, poem ref. 3.56. They are the products of a quiet unchosen loneliness brought about by being unmarried and virtually friendless in a busy bustling city.

As in the previous period, when Issa moves out of the city to visit fellow poets in the surrounding countryside it is with the constant thought that it is to the homes of others for which he is heading, poem ref. 3.31. 3.69, or for nights of sleeping in the open alone, ref. 3.50. 3.126.

In contrast to the previous period however, poems which describe the hardships and loneliness of others increase, and in seeing loneliness objectively in the lives of others Issa is more able to bear it in his own life. Verse ref. 3.49 describes a poor street singer asleep on

the open ground in the winter bleakness at eventide, and
the following verse is in the same vein;

Ume saku ya kozo wa echigo no aburebito.⁶⁰

Plum blossoms flower.

Last year he was

The unemployed

Of Echigo..

Verse ref. 3.95 describes the hands of a poor serving girl in the home of one of his patrons. It is a verse which is very powerful in its sympathy for the poor and lonely. This sympathy for the unfortunate is also strongly evident in his verses which describe the fate of the victims of fire in Edo. Fires were very frequent in the great city, so much so that they were in fact known as 'the flowers of Edo'. Issa's verses ref. 3.42, 3.43 and 3.123 reveal his sympathy for those who had suffered loss in the fires.

Issa, born and bred in the country, and unsophisticated by nature, was never able to feel at home among the gawdy, proud, smart and quick-witted people of Edo. He constantly felt both overpowered and ill at ease in the big city. The men of letters born and bred in Edo reflected the characteristics of the city in their work, which was elegant, sophisticated and refined. Natsume Seibi and his poetry is one example.

Issa, in his younger days, was attracted to the city and admired the work and personalities of the poets who held positions of literary esteem, but he was never able to

join them. He was always on the fringe and nursed feelings of alienation which in this period began to turn to scorn and sarcasm as evidenced in verses ref. 3.58, 3.64, 3.65, 3.82 and 3.108, for examples, of a general nature and verses 3.113 and 3.142, which refer to his own feelings of scorn for the city of Edo and his sense of alienation within it.

There is no doubt that this feeling of alienation in Edo was one other basic cause of his loneliness and one of the major reasons for his eventual return to Kashiwabara.

The theme of loneliness in this period shows a greater breadth of spirit and content than in the previous period. It is no longer almost exclusively dependent upon the aloneness he experienced at the death of his father. It now pervades his life in general, like a general cloud of gloom upon him. When he walks upon the shells upon the beach, the sound of them crunching underfoot is expressed as a kind of comfort in his loneliness, ref. 3.25, and in the summer nights when he is still awake and with no diversion but to admire the beauty of the burning oil lamp, it is the croaking of the mating frogs that fill his ears, verse ref. 3.9.

Thus in both a social sense and in a professional sense Issa was a very lonely person during this period. While others around him progressed upon the haiku path, he felt himself growing old and being left behind. While others around him succeeded in life, married and built homes, his state of poverty remained the same and his hopes of betterment grew dim.

A poem of his written towards the very end of this period seems to catch the general mood of his life at this time.

Mata hito ni kakenukarekeri aki no kure.⁶¹

On the road,
Overtaken yet again
By others,
As Autumn draws in.

Issa's loneliness was that of the unsuccessful and the unrecognised. In essence it was quite different to that of the great master Bashō, who wrote;

Kono michi ya yuku hito nashi ni aki no kure.⁶²

Upon this pathway
I find no other traveller
As Autumn draws in.

Both these poems are responses to actual experience yet at the same time symbolic of the poet's feelings about himself and his work. Issa is constantly overtaken and experiences the loneliness of the man who is left behind. Bashō is the pioneer, the supreme master, so far ahead upon the haiku pathway that there is no one else with him. His was the loneliness of the genius.

This aspect of Issa's loneliness reveals itself through his work in two further ways. First, we begin to find poems which are concerned with the fact that Issa is visibly getting old, and then we have poems into which the thought of death is introduced. Both these developments are natural in the light of Issa's own pessimistic and despairing view of himself and his life.

Verse ref. 3.127 reveals him to have lost his last fragments of teeth at 43 years of age, while in poem ref. 3.143 he sees his hand as 'wrinkled'. The following verse reveals to us that he was white haired by 41 years of age..

Shibashi mate shiragami kuraben hachitatak⁶³i.

Come now, stop awhile

And let's see who has the whitest hair?

Travelling priest.

Prolonged hardship, constant loneliness and an increasing awareness that he was growing old in his anonymity led to thoughts of death as a solution to all problems. As a development of the themes of poverty and loneliness, the idea of death in general, and one or two poems that strongly suggest death through suicide in particular, find their way into his work.

Verses ref. 3.14, 3.34, 3.88, 3.92, 3.105, 3.150 and 3.161 all relate the idea of death to Issa himself in a personal way. He sees himself as 'not yet turned to dust', 'heading for a Buddhist hell', soon to be prayed over by a travelling priest and having reached the time to prepare for dying.

It is in verses ref. 3.92 and 3.105 that the hint of suicide is present. In the former he imagines the sound of the woodpecker's tapping to be a constant repetition beckoning or compelling him towards death, while in the latter he imagines that even the mountain is thinking that Issa has already lived too long. The thought of suicide is not clearly expressed but these two verses in particular

reveal a morbid preoccupation with the thought of death.

Considering the general concept of suicide in Japan,
that it offers an 'honorable' way out of one's troubles,^{63a.} it
would not have been an unusual step for Issa to have taken
considering the hardships and loneliness of his life at
this time and the fact that he saw no future for himself.
See verse ref. 3.135.

Verses which contain the idea of death in a general
way or in an objective way, in that they are not about
Issa himself or his thoughts of himself, include verses
ref. 3.11, 3.42, 3.43, 3.94, 3.125, 3.159 and 3.168.
Smoke from the charnel house, the old man praying for
mercy, the eventual fate of the murderer and the fate of
those lost in the water at the collapse of the Eidai Bridge
are all directly about death itself, while verse ref. 3.42,
3.43 and 3.159 are about the impermanence of things in
general.

The pervading atmosphere of these poems is that of pessim-
ism. Issa immediately assumes that he would have been
among the dead for sure if he had been at the Eidai Bridge
when it collapsed. His interest in death and the mis-
fortune of others is a result of this growing tendency
towards pessimism and the purpose of this aspect of his
work is to illustrate the deepening feeling he has of the
brevity and uselessness of life itself. He seems to be
quite sure that death is not far off.

Kono sugi wa waga mi no ue ka naku karasu.⁶⁴

Will it be

Over me that next

The crow will caw?

This sense of pessimism and the thought of death, often in a morbid fashion, was greatly aggravated by the loneliness he experienced so often at this time in his life, and for this reason they have been introduced together here.

(iii). Poems on Small and Weak Creatures

Issa's feelings of sympathy for insects and small animals become far more evident in this period. In comparison to the previous period the number of verses in which they are included increases considerably. Issa's feelings concerning men in general gradually become more and more affected by his anger and cynicism and the prejudices built up within him by the poverty and discrimination he experienced. In contrast to such emotions, his feelings of affection and sympathy for small and weak creatures develops into something far greater than those which are found in most people, whether poet or not. There is a purity, a wholesomeness about this aspect of his work. He now begins to view them with an empathy which is almost saintly in its fondness and feelings towards them. He matures from the previous period in which he tended to use them simply as vehicles to express his own feelings and now begins to show a truly objective fondness and sympathy for them which is for their sake alone.

Some of his best work is found among these verses which centre upon the small and weak creatures and without doubt many of his best loved poems are from this area of his work.

The following verses about small and weak creatures are almost purely objective, poems ref. 3.5, 3.7, 3.15, 3.20, 3.27, 3.39, 3.40, 3.53, 3.75, 3.97, 3.118, 3.137 3.145, 3.152, 3.165, and 3.167, but there is very little trace of the pessimism found in such poems in the previous period. Indeed, some are clearly examples of a sense of optimism, for example the early butterfly flying vigorously into the springtime, ref. 3.5, the butterfly at ease, ref. 3.27, the comic picture of the duck, ref. 3.39, the wren singing out into the downpour, ref. 3.53, the New Years lice, ref. 3.152 and the birth of the ice-fish, ref. 1.163. From the above we can trace a change in Issa's view of the small and weak, as he sees them far more for their own sakes, rather than as reflections of his own feelings.

Poems in which the small and weak creatures become his conversational partners also increase, see poems ref. 3.33, 3.36, 3.38, 3.57, 3.59, 3.86, 3.139, 3.143, 3.149, and 3.160. In many of these poems his concern is clearly for the creatures rather than for himself. He reveals himself as ready to cooperate with the quail, ref. 3.36, and the grasshopper, and he is obviously enjoying the sight of the duck ref. 3.39 and the owl ref. 3.145 and shows concern for the future of the bees, ref. 3.139.

Those poems of this type which show a measure of subjectivity show a much greater sympathy for the objects of the verses than concern for his own feelings. The frogs in verse ref.3.9 and the stray cat in verse ref.3.107 are seen in a subjective way by the unmarried Issa, but there is no heaviness about these verses.. Verses ref.3.113, 3.136, and 3.155 are clearly subjective, as Issa views the ducks flying over Edo and imagines them to be proud of the fact that they have seen the great city, and as he imagines the frogs to be either croaking because they are getting old or looking at him with wry looks on their faces! Yet in these verses, too, it is the light touch of cynical humor that is predominant, rather than the intrusion of Issa's own feelings of gloom, loneliness or pessimism.

The verse ref. 3.41 is perhaps more symbolic than any other of the change and the development in this area of Issa's work. When read with the prose which precedes it this is indeed a remarkable verse. Among the devastation, death, uneasiness and misery of the flood, Issa, as the waters recede, is alert to the chirping of a single cricket hiding somewhere, as the moon shines high in the sky. The moon and the cricket are contrasted and we are left with the pathos of the surviving insect, alone now that most of its kind has been washed away in the swirling waters. There is loneliness and hope, tragedy and joy mingled together. In all likelihood Issa sees himself in the single cricket as

one who has just managed to survive and is yet still hopefully 'chirping'. This verse is very close to Issa's mature distinctive style.. It is clearly subjective and yet the emphasis, the weight of sympathy, is with the insect and not with the poet.

During this period the occasional gloomy verse can be found. For example the poem

Chō tobu ya kono yo ni nozomi nai yō ni.⁶⁵

The butterfly

As if without hope

In this world,

Flies by.

For the most part, however, it is Issa's genuine fondness and sympathy for the small and weak creatures which is the emerging predominant theme. This is clearly revealed in verses ref. 3.38, 3.73, 3.74, 3.137, 3.143, 3.151, 3.154, 3.156 and 3.162, where he shows his sensitivity to the needs of the grasshopper, his concern for the young birds about to leave the nest, the firefly on his wrinkled hand, the turtles fished by the crowds at the year-end market, his sympathy for the snails that have been eaten and the birds with their eyes sewn shut as they are fattened for the table, and his view of the sparrows as his playmates.

This sympathy is further extended to the little flowers as he notices their destruction by the thoughtlessness or carelessness of men, see verses ref. 3.12 and 3.18.

He begins, too, to compare men with the small and weak

animals and contrasts men in an unfavourable light, see verses ref. 3.8 and 3.73. Verses 3.98, 3.151, 3.156 and 3.162 can also be viewed in this way as the weakness of the creatures and the cruelty of man are contrasted. In this way Issa reveals his indignation against society. This view of the animals' weakness and impermanence, together with his treatment of them as conversational partners, creates an effect reminiscent of a child talking to the insects and birds that he finds around him. Because of the continuing subjective element that remains in his work, and the fact that he includes plants and flowers in his sympathy, Issa's view of life has been described as a form of animism, which sees all things permeated with the same spirit of life.⁶⁶

This sympathetic attitude towards the small and weak does not yet extend its influence into the world of children. Poems about children are still very few. Of the 2400 verses Issa wrote during this period less than ten are about children. Verses ref. 3.26 and 3.133 are from among this handful, and verses ref. 3.80 and 3.134 are based upon children's stories and read like nursery rhymes.

(iv). Issa's Observation of The Lives of Ordinary
People and Everyday Objects.

In this period Issa increasingly turns his gaze towards the everyday lives of ordinary people and the everyday objects their homes contained. This tendency, begun in a very small way in the Kansei period and slightly developed in the Kyōwa period, now becomes one of the major aspects of his work.

In the poems translated in the selected verses for this period, we have mentioned the beancurd maker's trough, ref. 3.48, the konniyaku maker's pail, ref. 3.55 and the wooden tongs that have been used to attend the fire that heats the bathwater, left in the drainage ditch.

Verse ref. 3.49 refers to the bitter life and struggle of the street singer. Issa's gaze is upon the poorer people, the beggar, the beancurd maker, the sweet-seller and the konniyaku maker. There are no verses in his work which feature the life of the comfortably well off, their gardens, their pleasures or their houses, unless such things are contrasted unfavourably with the world of nature, as in verse ref. 3.6.

The number of verses in which everyday objects are featured increased greatly in this period and they leave a lasting impression on the heart of the reader in their compelling and realistic depiction of everyday life.

In the second year alone of this period Issa refers in his verses to the broken pot, ref. 3.70, a handful of

fuel for the fire, ref. 3.71, rice cakes, ref. 3.80, and rice pounding tools, ref. 3.106. In the same year the following can be added, fish baking, roasted eels, people searching for edible snails in the fields, soup, pickled plums, blow-fish ready for eating and baked sardines.⁶⁷ The fact that all these verses include objects which are to do with food and cooking is indicative of Issa's own poverty and needs at this time. They remain a favourite theme of his, however, even when he is no longer in want.

Other verses which include everyday objects are poems ref. 3.4 the pot on the stove, 3.9 the oil lamp, 3.17 the wooden washing bowl, 3.27 the dyer's pail, 3.45 the wooden pestle, 3.67 cracked teacups, 3.90 a wooden fence, 3.131 the back door, 3.133 chopsticks, 3.146 worn quilts and 3.164 a water closet.

It should be noticed however that in all these verses Issa still uses traditional phrases which indicate the season of the year and thus combines realism with tradition, a mark of his mature work. This combination results in the humorous element for which he has become renowned but in this period the humorous element is largely incidental. Issa is not at this stage being humorous for the sake of humour when he is composing verses in this vein. Realism is the predominant theme.

(v) The Humorous Aspect of Issa's Poetry.

The haiku poet Masaoka Shiki considered Issa's three major characteristics to be humour, satire and affection,⁶⁸ in other words, comic humour, sarcasm and irony, and⁶⁹

sympathy for the small and weak. Issa has been reassessed since Shiki's day, and the humorous aspect of his work, though recognised as a major characteristic of his poetry, is not now considered as being so absolutely central.^{69a} Realism and subjectivity are now considered as equally important, if not more important, as Issa's major contribution to the development of modern haiku. It is interesting to note, however, that a major poet like Shiki should list both humour and satire as separate characteristics of Issa's work. The word translated as humour is *kokkei*, which means 'comic humour', whereas the word translated as satire, *fushi*, can also be translated 'sarcasm' or 'irony'.

It is in this period that we see clearly the development of these two distinctive types of humorous verse.

Verses ref. 3.20, 3.39, 3.96, 3.103, 3.145 and 3.152 are examples of the former. The humour is innocent, artless and childlike, simply a comic way of looking at small and weak animals, a children's toy and a little wayside idol. These are all objects that would be looked upon with affection by a child, with the exception of the lice. These verses belong to that part of Issa's personality that was untouched by the hardships he bore.

Alongside this development we see a more cynical and sarcastic humour, an idiosyncratic way of looking at life and a growing hint of bitterness.

Between these two distinct traits there are humorous verses which are neither one nor the other but in which, through the use of devices common to most poets take on a humorous air. Verse ref. 3.29 is one example. This verse is based on a similar but more successful verse by Buson.⁷⁰ It is humorous in a crude way yet it is not crudeness simply for its own sake. The verse is saved from that by the contrast in the colour and finery of the parasols and the commonplace activity they conceal. The same device of comparing opposites to create a humorous effect is seen in the verse;

Kusahana o yokete suwaru ya kachizumō.⁷¹

The winning wrestler,
Parting the flowers and grasses first,
Sits down.

The powerfully built wrestler is contrasted with the frail flowers and the result is a humorous verse based on a clever comparison of opposites. This kind of humorous verse is common to many poets of this era.

The true uniqueness of Issa's humorous verses lies in that part of his work which is a reaction against his circumstances and experience.

His cynical view of life and his self-denigration are reactions to the discrimination he experienced as 'mukudori', as he tried desperately yet unsuccessfully to succeed in Edo, Unable to feed himself through his art, not truly accepted by the haiku schools, completely alone, with the inheritance problem constantly reminding him of his position as a step-son and dependent upon

others as he wandered here and there, produced in Issa a sarcastic spirit and a deep sense of inferiority. His verses during this period begin to include expressions of sarcasm and self denigration, recalcitrance and a growing uneasiness concerning his future.

It has already been noted how Issa used the word binbō in a cynical way to describe objects personally owned or related to him. Verses ref. 3.58 and 3.59 are in this vein. Issa sees the nightingales who sing near his dwelling, as those with poor voices or those who are merely on their way home from somewhere else! Verse 3.83 is an expression of indignation at those who use the cherry blossoms for money making. It is humorous inasmuch as it treats a conventional poetic subject in a purely realistic way.

Verses 3.108 and 3.114 contain very strong expressions of self-denigration. Shaba fusagi and goku tsubushi are powerful colloquial expressions of scorn and derision which can be translated as 'good for nothing' and (literally) 'parasitic rice devourer'. They are both strong synonyms for someone who is superfluous, parasitic and worthless. That Issa used such expressions about himself is indicative of the way he despised himself. These verses are not composed in jest, neither are they the result of study, they are rather the heart cries of a man, now in middle age, who feels acutely, as a farmer's son, that he is a parasite of society, and yet who is painfully aware that he has nowhere else to go, and that there is nothing he can do about his circumstances.

His cynicism towards Edo and her citizens is reflected

in the verses 3.142, 3.176 and the following verse;

Edo shu ni mi karasaretaru sakura kana.⁷²

Viewed to death

By the Edo populace,

Cherry blossoms.

Sarcasm is also the predominant theme in the prose passage 'Konpira Otsuru' and the verses ref. 3.65, 3.66.

The sarcasm in many of these verses is powerful and biting and yet it is part of the haiku charm and part of Issa's genius that the resulting verses while powerful are also humorous. They evoke a wry smile on the part of the reader that a man who had seen such hardship could still be objective enough to write verses about himself while in the midst of such circumstances. In this respect Issa has no predecessor in Japanese poetry.

It should be carefully observed, however, that Issa still roots his poetry in the soil of convention by the use of traditional words and phrases used to indicate the seasons etc. and through the choice of traditional subject matter. His conclusions, however, are often uniquely his own. This is illustrated clearly by Kuriyama⁷³ through the comparison of three verses, one by Bashō, one by Buson and one by Issa, as follows;

Ume ga ka ni notto hi no deru yamaji kana.

Fragrance of plum blossom,

Suddenly the sunrise

Upon a mountain road.

Bashō.

Ume ga ka no tachinoborite ya tsuki no kasa.

At the fragrance of the plum blossoms

Does the halo round the moon

Expand yet further still? Buson.

Ume ga ka ya donata ga kitemo kake chawan.

Fragrance of plum blossom,

No matter who should come,

Cracked tea cups! Issa. ref. 3.67.

The verse by Bashō is characterized by purity, brightness and hope, as well as the ideal circumstances for travel. The scene depicted is simple and beautiful as an ideal moment is caught in a lovely verse.

The verse by Buson is mysterious and elegant, coming from the world of the fairy story. The competition and comparison between the fragrance of the plum blossom and the halo round the moon is 'otherworldly' in its beauty. It does not have the simplicity of Bashō's verse and goes beyond even the world of nature.

The verse by Issa is strikingly realistic. It is very much 'down to earth' and is rooted in his own experience. It is subjective and personal. It is a good example of Issa's juxtaposition of the conventional opening phrase full of promise, with a conclusion about his everyday circumstances. It contrasts the beauty of the fragrance of the plum blossoms with the wretchedness of his daily life. The poem thus becomes a sarcastic comment which ridicules the purely idealistic

world of Bashō's verse and the utterly unreal world conjured up by Buson's verse. It is saved from being sarcasm for its own sake by being founded upon his real circumstances. This kind of verse was without precedent in the history of haiku.

The previously quoted verses ref. 3.58 and 3.59 are similar in that nightingales and plum blossom are a purely conventional coupling in haiku verse yet Issa introduces his personal feelings in a sarcastic way into these poems.

Verses ref. 3.76, 3.153 and the following verse are all in the same style, with the conventional and beautiful opening phrase contrasted with a common everyday sight or an expression of his own wretchedness.

Ume ga ka ni ukare idetari busho neko.⁷⁴

At the fragrance of the plum blossom

Out he comes to stroll about,

The lazy cat!

Issa's verses in this strain are not primarily attempts at humour but they are humorous. The humour comes from the fact that Issa sees things quite differently to either Bashō or Buson or other haiku poets in general. Bashō's verse about the mountain pathway adds beauty to beauty while Buson's verse combines the fragrance of the blossom with the moon in a unique way. Their gaze is upward and outward. But what of Issa's verses? He seems to look inward upon his own circumstances rather than outward towards the pathway. He looks downward to the lazy cat as being aroused by the scent of the

plum blossoms, rather than upward toward the moon. The result is neither beauty nor elegance, but humour tinged with cynicism and self depreciation. It is this realistically humorous element which is unique to Issa.

(vi) Issa's Use of Colloquial and Everyday Expressions.

Issa, from the very beginning of his life as a serious poet, was an avid student of words and their usage. During his six year journey into Western Japan during the Kansei period, and indeed even before then, he had begun to collect and catalogue words of all types, those used in classical poetry and those from among the various dialects he encountered upon his travels. It is in this period, the first half of the Bunka era, that his interest in common, colloquial and dialect words begins to show itself in his poetry.

The practice of using colloquial and provincial dialect words in haiku verse was by no means unique to Issa, but no other poet used them with such frequency and few to such effect as Issa did.⁷⁵

This is not to say that Issa abandoned verse which made reference to the classics of Japanese literature, for in this period, too, such verses can be found. For example the verse ref. 3.17 is based upon the opening prose passage of the 26th. chapter of the Ise Monogatari.⁷⁶ Verse ref. 3.19 contains a phrase kogane hana saku, which is taken from a poem in the 18th. section of the Manyōshū.⁷⁷

while the following verse is based upon a poem in the 20th. section of the collection Kokinshū.

Misamurai uchiwa to mōse higashi yama.⁷⁸

The warrior

Asking for his fan

Heads for Higashi mountain.

Poems based upon the classics are by this period very few indeed, while common, dialect. and colloquial words and expressions appear with increasing frequency.

Poems which contain colloquial words and phrases include verses ref. 3.18 oppishigareshi, 'squashed flat', ref. 3.20 fukubiki, 'toad', a colloquial word from Shizuoka prefecture,⁷⁹ ref. 3.75 butsukusanukasu an onomatopoeic colloquialism meaning 'to complain', ref. 3.89 oppishigetaru meaning flattened, and ref. 3.82 he tomo omowanu meaning 'couldn't give a fart'.

Among the colloquial expressions that Issa used are many that are repetitive colloquial phrases. It was considered poor economy of words to repeat the same word twice in the tiny haiku poem, yet Issa did this to very good effect. Examples of this can be found in verses ref. 3.5 uso uso to, 'as if searching', ref. 3.117 hochā hochā to, 'softly softly', and the phrase horo horo to in the following verse;

Horo horo to mukago ochikeri aki no ame.⁸⁰

One by one, here and there

Fall the yam buds

In the autumn rain.

Almost all these colloquial repetitive phrases are

also onomatopoeic expressions, as is the word 'chitto' used in poem ref. 3.57.

Other common words can be found in verses ref. 3.12

binnai meaning 'poor little', 3.33 urotaena meaning 'do not be confused', 3.36 jama nara meaning 'if it is in the way' and 3.39 aite gamashiku meaning 'as if to take on'.

In this period Issa also begins to use the common male personal pronoun ore or ora in preference to the more polite ware. This development can be seen in

verses ref. 3.59, 3.76 and 3.101. To Issa, from the countryside and living among the common people, somehow the usual word used as the male personal pronoun in haiku, ware, seems too polite. Ore suits him; and his verses much better when they are not in the purely conventional style. Especially when he is comparing something belonging to himself with the beauty of the traditional opening poetic phrase (as in poems ref. 3.76 and 3.59) the use of the common pronoun certainly gives Issa's verses a down to earth flavour and clearly stamps them as 'of the common man'.

Verses ref. 3.58, 3.107, 3.161 and 3.164 all contain original and novel words which Issa has coined himself.⁸¹ They are, respectively, heta uguisu meaning 'nightingale with a poor voice', tsumakasegi meaning 'out looking for a wife', shinikeiko meaning 'to practice dying' and kokagami meaning 'god of the water-closet'. These

words gradually increase during this period and contribute to the uniqueness of Issa's poetry in that they are unconventional, common and humorous.

Another device Issa used to great effect was personification. Examples of this are poems ref.3.8, 3.20, 3.27, 3.39, 3.75 and 3.160. Issa also personified inanimate objects, though examples of this are few in this period, although verse ref. 3.148 is of particular note. In this verse Issa saw the snow, i.e. Shinano snow, as falling upon him deliberately, i.e. kokoro kara. Kokoro kara is, in this context, a difficult phrase to translate and I have translated it almost literally, (literally it would translate as 'from the heart'). I have done this because it seems to me to be in keeping with the spirit and meaning of the verse.

Only Issa, among the poets of Japan, wrote about snow in this way. He saw it as his enemy and viewed it with hate. There is nothing delicate or conventional in this verse and it is strongly subjective. Traditional poetry was very subjective, but this subjectivity was subdued, implied and latent, (Jap. Court Poetry p.187,193,367). Though powerful, it was refined and delicate, even when the device of personification was deployed.

A good example of personification, in a conventional verse used subjectively, is this poem from the Kokinshū;

On this day in spring

When the lambent air suffuses

Soft tranquility,

Why should the cherry blossoms flutter

With unsettled heart to earth?

In this verse the cherry blossoms are personified in that they are described as falling 'with unsettled heart'. Such a description of falling cherry blossoms is extremely precise in that even on a completely windless day, as in the poem, the cherry blossoms flutter erratically as if 'at heart' unsettled. There is just a hint of subjectivity here, in that to have seen the blossoms thus, the poet himself was probably irritated or troubled about something. However the feelings of the poet do not at all overwhelm our understanding of how the blossoms fall, rather they enhance our understanding. In comparison, Issa's feelings are strongly imparted to the snow and it is depicted as his personal enemy. It is this powerful and personal subjective element which is often present in those poems in which Issa uses the device of personification and which adds to the distinctive nature of his work.

As yet in this period Issa does not include the use of proverbs in his verses although one exception is the verse;

83

Hana saku ya ashi no nori mono te no yakko.

Cherry blossoms.

When I travel, its on 'shanks pony'

And the only servants I have

Are my own two hands!

The proverb, which makes up the greater part of this verse, simply means that the speaker does not depend on anyone else for anything.

Although, in general, Issa's novel word usage and bold expression adds to the uniqueness of his developing distinctive style, his innovations did not all result in a positive influence upon his work. We see developing in this period one of the major reasons for the fact that Issa was such a prolific writer of haiku verse. He creates a pattern for a verse which is originally fresh, almost unique in its basic idea and word usage. For example the verse ref. 3.9.

Aburabi no utsukushiki yo ya naku kaeru.

This night

The oil lamps look so beautiful

And the frogs croak.

Alone in his room Issa notices the beauty of the light from the oil lamp as he sits listening to the croaking of the mating frogs. We sense a longing for company on his part and yet he still appreciates the beauty of the lamplight. However, as we read more of his verses in this and later periods we find that he begins to use the word 'utsukushii' too frequently and without the same discrimination so that the effect is dulled and even lost. See verses ref. 3.77, 3.110, 3.144 and 3.167. Having created a pattern for a verse Issa then tends to overwork it to the detriment of his work as a whole. Even so one of the major developments of Issa's work during this period is his use of colloquial and common words. In this aspect of his style he is very rapidly progressing towards his best work.

(vii). The Religious Factor in Issa' Work.

There are very few verses which contain any kind of religious sentiment in the Kansei period, and virtually none at all in the Kyōwa period. In this period, however, religion, religious objects and religious sentiment begin to find a place in Issa's work. During this period they are by no means prominent, but they do give evidence that religious concepts begin to enter into and shape Issa's view of life in general and his own life in particular.

There are a small number of humorous verses which are centred upon religious persons or objects. The priest relieving himself in the field, ref. 3.29, the wayside idol keeping the frost away, ref.3.96, the fly, about to be swatted, upon the face of the Buddhist statue, ref. 3.165, and the daruma's face described as one 'that couldn't give a fart', ref. 3.82. (NB. the daruma is the image of Dharma, often made of paper-mache, or some other light material, and used as toys or ornaments). The prose passage Konpira Tsuru is also a cynical description of a religious personage.

Other verses contain a serious Buddhist religious sentiment. Many of the verses of this nature have already been quoted in part (ii) of this section and include those verses which deal with the Buddhist religious concept of the intransience of life, the general impermanence of all things and the thought of death. Examples of these serious poems are ref. 3.11, 3.14, 3.42, 3.88, 3.92, 3.99, 3.150, 3.159, and 3.161.

To these can be added the prose section 'The Collapse of the Eldai Bridge' and the closing verse of this piece which is a serious poem about reincarnation.. One other poem based on the thought of reincarnation is the lighter verse ref. 3.139.

Basic Buddhist sentiment is the underlying theme of the verse;

Tamagoto mo kojiki no fue mo kasumi keru.⁸⁴

The bejewelled harp,

The beggar's flute,

Both fade away.

Issa here sees beauty in both rich and poor alike. He sees both as equal and beautiful, a concept basic to Buddhism in general.⁸⁵

The religious sentiment in Issa's verses, however, is not confined to merely basic Buddhist concepts. We begin to see the specific influence of Jōdo (Pure Land) Buddhism in Issa's work during this period.. For the first time in his work Issa introduces the idea of prayer to Amida Buddha. Two examples of this are the verses ref. 3.15 and 3.94. In the former, Issa sees the tiny sparrows waiting to be fed as 'praying with open mouths to Amida Buddha'. The word Issa uses for prayer in this verse, nembutsu, is the word used to describe the prayer that is repeated over and over again asking for the mercy of Amida. The latter verse actually contains the words namu Amida which is the shortened version⁸⁶ of the actual prayer of invocation to Amida Buddha. In this way Issa has moved from general Buddhist concepts to the

specific expression of faith peculiar to that Buddhist sect in which he was brought up from infancy.

In the two verses quoted it is the weak and helpless birds and the old man, symbols of those who cannot help themselves, who are depicted as depending upon the mercy of Amida. In the opening prose of 'Hanami no Ki' Issa quotes a poem by Kikaku in which are featured six statues of Amida Buddha and after which Issa, too, requests the mercy of Buddha in the next life.

In addition to these examples of the way Buddhist concepts of both a general and specific nature begin to find their way into Issa's work, we find that Issa begins to use a phrase which has strong overtones of Amida Buddhism and which he, from this period on, uses with increasing frequency and eventually with clear personal application to himself. It is a phrase that eventually becomes quite central as an expression of how he views his own life.

The phrase is found during this period in the two following verses;

Akikaze ni anata makase no kochō kana.⁸⁷

The little butterfly

Entrusting itself to the mercy of Buddha

In the autumn wind.

Tomokaku mo anata makase no katatsumori.⁸⁸

Come what may,

Entrusting itself to the mercy of Buddha,

The snail.

Issa had in fact used the phrase once before as early on as the Kyōwa period. 3rd. year.⁸⁹ The phrase in question is 'anata makase'. It is a difficult phrase to translate because of the breadth of usage it enjoyed. It could merely mean 'just take things as they come', or in more serious circumstances 'leave it to fate', or it could be a genuine religious expression of trust in the mercy of Amida Buddha for the present circumstances or the future. It is, however, undoubtedly a religious phrase from the vocabulary of Amida Buddhism, (Murata p.105). The phrase was by no means limited to Issa and when he first used it in the Kyōwa period he based his poem on one found in the 'Zuisaihikki' by a poet named Chiyo Ni.⁹⁰ The phrase was also used by the famous haiku poet Ryōta,⁹¹ who was born in Shinano but had died by the time Issa was 24 years of age, after becoming a well known and acknowledged master poet in both the Edo and the Kinki regions in particular. Issa possessed and studied copies of this man's collections in which poems using the phrase 'anata makase' and 'tomokaku mo anata makase' are found.⁹²

Issa's usage of the phrase in this period is still largely imitative of the way Ryōta had used it and does not have really strong religious meaning but it provided⁹³ Issa with a tool with which he was later to express his view of life in general and his own life in particular within the religious concept of Amida Buddhism. In this period we can thus trace the beginnings of a religious element in Issa's poetry.

We have already seen that Issa's sense of self denigration and unworthiness contributed towards the cynical aspect of his humour but in some of Issa's verses in this vein in this period there is a strong religious sentiment as well. Issa's sense of guilt at being an unproductive member of society grows stronger and is expressed more clearly and in more distinctly religious terms during this period. Verses ref. 3.102, 3.112 and 3.129 introduce the concepts of sinfulness, wastefulness and shame, while the following verse and prose introduce the thought of future punishment because of a sinfully wasted life;

"None have a future more fearful than he who eats
without ever having tilled the land and he who
attires himself without ever having spun the yarn;

Kuwa no batsu omoitsuku yo ya kari no naku.

This night

When I think of the punishment

Awaiting him who never holds the hoe,

The wild geese cry out.⁹⁴

Issa has come to the conclusion that his way of life makes it impossible for him to consider any future bliss in the afterlife gained through merit accumulated in this life. It is this growing conviction together with his increasing expression of Buddhism in terms of the mercy of Amida towards the helpless, that combine to give him a religious perspective through which to view life in general and his own life in particular. This development is by this period gradually finding expression in his work.

(viii). Expressions of Patriotism in This Period.

During this period Russia was pressing Japan to open trade relations with her, and in a show of force had attacked and plundered the northern Isles of Sakhalin and Yezo.⁹⁵ The shogunate adopted a defiant attitude to the forceful persuasion of the Russians and there was both excitement and a rise of patriotic fervour among the Japanese in general.⁹⁶ Issa expressed this general sentiment, in which he obviously shared, in his poetry at this time..

Also during this period, on March 5th. 1807,⁹⁷ Issa purchased a book by the nationalistic scholar Motoori Norinaga called the Himokagami.⁹⁸ Issa was obviously impressed by the ideas and teaching of this man and this is also evident in the poems on the theme of patriotism in this period, including verses ref. 3.60, 3.61, 3.62, 3.63 and 3.138. To these can be added the following verse;

Ume ga ka ya oroshiya o hawasu miyo ni au.⁹⁹

Fragrance of plum blossom,

Ablom in this reign

In which Russia

Is sent crawling away.

Verse 1.138, and the above verse in particular, have a strong nationalistic and patriotic flavour and the fact that this finds expression in Issa's poetry is further evidence that he was prepared to express anything that moved him, through the medium of haiku verse.

The closing lines of the 'Hanami no Ki' read as follows;

"... but everyone who sees this sight today voices the same opinion that those past days cannot compare with the springtime in this present prosperous and abundant period of shogunal rule".

Here, too, we find the sentiment he expressed in the Kansei period that Japan was a prosperous and peaceful place and that one should be proud and thankful to live in such a time. The cynicism and sarcasm Issa expressed so strongly towards the society he lived in is not yet extended to the rulers of the land.

(ix). Issa and Ippyō.

Chisokuho Ippyō (1769 - 1840) was a Buddhist priest of the Nichiren sect, the same sect to which Natsume Seibi adhered. Ippyō was the resident priest at the Hongyō¹⁰⁰ temple in the Yanaka district of Edo.

By the beginning of the Bunka period Issa's relationship with Natsume Seibi was firmly established and Issa was a frequent participant in the haiku gatherings that took place regularly in Seibi's residence. It was here that Issa met Ippyō. By August of 1805 both Issa and Ippyō took part in the same poetic sequence along with eight¹⁰¹ other poets at Seibi's. In July 1806 and September 1807 their names are found together in sequences of haiku¹⁰² verse recorded at Seibi's. By this time Issa and Ippyō had become firm friends. Their friendship established, Issa became a frequent visitor to the Hongyō temple to practice the haiku art with Ippyō. He visited Ippyō as many as five times a month.¹⁰³ Ippyō was keen to have the company of other haiku poets and built a special room

which he reserved for their use.

Ippyō moved to the Izu peninsular, to the town of Mishima, in 1817 when Issa was 54 years old.¹⁰⁴ This was the same year in which Issa paid his final visit to Edo. During Issa's final visits to Edo, after he had begun to live in Kashiwabam, it was to Ippyō rather than Seibi to whom Issa went for hospitality.

The friendship between Issa and Ippyō transcended their religious and social differences and although Ippyō had not experienced the same hardships and want as Issa, their poetry was very similar in almost all respects. A few sample verses from Ippyō's collections reveal at a glance how similar his verses are to those of Issa;

Iza kore e kore e to sumire saki ni kerī.

Come now, just a little more

Just a little more,

So blooms

The violet.

Tsubakura no mite minu furi ya ware ga ie.

The swallows see it

But pretend they don't!

This house of mine.

Yo no nai hito to iwarete yo samukana.

Said by others

To be a man

With nothing to do.

How cold the night..

Enoshima ya nani ga fusoku de naku chidori.

Eno isle!

What does the plover lack
 That makes her cry
 So discontentedly?

Zeni nakute tamoto futatsu mo nodaka kana.

How quiet they are,
 Kimono sleeves

In which no coins are carried!

Since Ippyo did not suffer the hardships that Issa did, his verses lack the subjective and realistic element found in Issa's work, but in all other respects these verses are very similar to those by Issa. Though a Buddhist priest, Ippyo possessed a free and easy spirit and did not live within the rigid rules and conventions of the priestly life.¹⁰⁶ This attitude, so similar to that of Issa towards haiku poetry, found its way into his verses and is partly responsible for the similarity between them. The two poets met at a crucial time in the development of Issa's distinctive style and their friendship was an encouragement to Issa to press forward in the style that he was developing.

The influence they had upon each other was mutual, as the following verses¹⁰⁷ reveal, but it remains without doubt that the friendship of this poet was a great stimulus to Issa.

Goma mitsubu hanetomo ureshi kiri no asa.

How happy to find
 Even just three
 Sesame seeds

On this misty morning. Ippyō. Bunka 9th. year.

Ame mitsubu ochitemo nureshi hisago kana.

It would be wetted

Even if just

Three drops of rain fell

Upon the little gourd. Issa. Bunka 1st. year.

Tsui tsui to matsu no naka yori hana susuki.

Waving lightly

From among the pines,

White headed

Pampas grass. Ippyō. Bunka 3rd. year.

Tsui tsui to yabu no naka yori natane kana.

Waving lightly

From the bamboo thicket,

Rapeseed. Issa. Bunka 3rd. year.

Ajisai e kata ashi kakeshi ko inu kana.

With one leg cocked

Upon the hydrangea plant,

A little dog. Ippyō. Bunka 6th. year.

Fuki no ha e kata ashi kakete naku kawazu.

With one leg cocked

Upon a leaf of the butterbur,

A croaking frog. Issa. Bunka 5th. year.

Zui to kite mizu nomu hana no toguchi kana.

Quietly, so quietly,

To the very doorway,

To drink water they come,

The flowers. Ippyō. Bunka 6th. year.

Toguchi made zuito kare komu nohara kana.

To the very doorway,

Quietly, so very quietly

They wither,

The moorland grasses. Issa. Bunka 10th. year.

The similarities in their basic concepts, word usage and composition are more than coincidence. The above quoted verses are just a sample from many other examples of the similarity between these two poets. The number of verses that are originally by Ippyo are only slightly more numerous than those by Issa.

The above similarities illustrate clearly that the 'Issa style' was by no means unique to Issa alone. Indeed both Issa and Ippyo reflect a general trend during this time back towards the original comic pre-Basho nature of haiku, which was part of the 'free spirit' of their age.¹⁰⁸ The 'Issa style' was by no means unique to Issa alone. Issa's uniqueness lies in the fact that he alone had the flexibility, the audacity and the determination to bring it to maturity and thus restore some freshness and new impetus to the haiku art. It was he alone who, because of his experience of a life of loneliness and hardship, added a new dimension to the haiku poem through the realism which he imparted to it giving it an authenticity it had not enjoyed before.

In finding a friend and fellow poet whose style and spirit was so similar to his own at such a crucial stage of his development as a poet had a considerable influence upon Issa and his style.

Conclusion.

The development of Issa's style in this period can be described as a gradual breaking into light from the gloom of the previous period. He begins to see his poverty in an objective manner, humour becomes more evident and poems on loneliness are less pessimistic. He has yet to move on to poems which reveal a more thorough religious philosophy of life but the beginnings of such can be discerned in this period.

The darker side of his personality is leading him towards a more bitingly sarcastic view of the world of men, but his view of the natural world of small creatures develops a purity, a lightness and a transparency. It is as if the bitter side of his personality is turned towards the world of men and their society, while within the same heart and mind there is an increasing tenderness and a deeply felt sympathy for the small, weak and downcast. He has learned to love the unlovely to an extent uncommon among all except the most religious of men. It is as if he can see the 'spirit of life' in almost any living thing. This view of life in the next period extends also to the world of children, but never to adults and their society, apart from the poor and the downtrodden.

As Issa moves closer to the distinctive style which is uniquely his own, he does not forsake the conventional styles. Verses ref. 3.3, 3.13 and 3.111 are all examples of good conventional verse. Verse ref. 3.19

is close to the Tenmei style and the verse ref. 3.163 is a little haiku masterpiece reminiscent of the best of Bashō's verses. These verses are representative of many others among Issa's work in this period.

NOTES ON CHAPTER TWO. Section 3.

1. Comp.Works vol.2 p.181.
- 1a. Matsuchiyama: the name of a hill in the temple compound of the Honryū temple in the Asakusa area of Tōkyō. Comp.Works vol.2 p.182.
2. Issa alludes in this verse to a phrase found in the Taketori Monogatari, a 10th. century fairytale of Buddhist background. Comp.Works vol.2 p.188.
3. The smoke in this verse is from the charnel house.
4. The phrase kogane hana saku, 'abloom with golden flowers', is taken from a verse in the Manyōshū. Ibid. p.204.
5. Mutsu: ancient province, now part of Aomori prefecture.
6. Kasai: flat area in the Shimosa region.
7. Ash is still a common ingredient in the traditional dyeing industry.
8. The high-priest's servants are giving him some privacy by surrounding him with their parasols.
9. Composed while looking at a painting of Buddhist hells.
10. Mount.Chichibu: name of a range in modern Gunma prefecture. They could be seen from the Nakasendō, the main highway between Edo and Shinano.
11. Poems 3.40 and 3.41 were written after a flood. The flowers are floating in the floodwater.
12. Hakoshinda: an area that is now part of Rine town in Ibaragi prefecture.
13. A poem of poverty. Issa has just one handful of fuel, it will go up in smoke the following day, and the snow has begun to fall.
14. Konniyaku: a greyish jelly-paste made from the starch of the devil tongue plant. It is a common ingredient in traditional Japanese dishes.
15. Enkaku Temple: a major temple of the Rinzai sect at Kamakura.
16. Nihonbashi; a bridge on what was the major road through Edo.
- 17a. The phrase Issa uses for 'the feelings between men and women' is taken from the Tsuretsuregusa. Ibid. p.261.

- 17b. Princess Somedono: popular name of Fujiwara Akiko (829-900). She was the daughter of Yoshifusa, the wife of emperor Montoku. A chief priest fell in love with her and died of his longing for her. Ibid.261.
18. The 'lady doing her washing in the stream' is a reference to an incident in the Tsuretsuregusa in which the fairy Kume loses his magic powers upon seeing the bare legs of a girl washing clothes in a stream. Ibid. p.261.
19. Momotaro;the central figure in one of the most popular children's stories in Japan by the same name.
20. Written while looking at a picture of Daruma, the Japanese version of Dharma.
21. Issa implies that the space between the house and the fence is so narrow that when he steps outside to enjoy the evening coolness the fence nearly 'blocks' his nose..
22. A lament to his own wretchedness..
23. Written at the end of the year when the traditional New Year rice cakes are looked forward to.They are made by pounding freshly boiled rice in a large wooden mortar with a large wooden mallet.
24. Gokutsubushi:a common expression for a social parasite.
25. Shitaya;part of central Edo where many bakufu officials had their houses. Ibid. p.358.
26. Aomono:district of Edo just south of Nihonbashi.
27. Issa is burning something in the hearth to make others think he is cooking something for his New Year meal.
28. In Edo times the funeral kimono was pale blue. Ibid.p.405..
29. The change from unlined to lined garments took place towards the end of the year, on a set day.
30. Awakened from sleep on a moonlit night by the call of the cuckoo, he sees the moonlight on the goose grass.
31. This is a poem of poverty. Issa implores the night-ingle to visit his dwelling for one more night.

32. Among the stalls set up at the year end markets were some for the amusement of the shoppers. One such stall sold small turtles, a symbol of longevity in Japan.
33. Pheasant's eye; the adonis plant.
34. The blossoms under which Issa sits are fluttering down as they fade and scatter. Issa, too, must go from beneath the trees to prepare for death!
35. The eyes of birds for the table, geese and ducks, were sewn shut to keep them from flying, and from moving about too much. This made them fatten quickly.
36. Tomigaoka Shrine; a place of worship and excursion in the Etō district of Edo. Over 1500 people died in this accident.
37. Konpira; a Shinto deity rather like Neptune, being the God of The Seas. A Konpira Shrine is a Shinto shrine where this deity is the chief object of worship.
- 38a. Kawana; a village just south of the town of Fūtsu in the Shimosa region.
- 38b. Prince Shirakawa; court official. The Shirakawa family were responsible for Shinto affairs under the shogunate. A permit to practice^s as a Shinto priest in Shinto rites was necessary from the official representative of the Shirakawa family.
39. The subject of this verse is the Shinto priestess, who is unmarried.
40. It seems that Issa left his copy of the will in the care of Nakamura Kisaemon, head of one of the founding families of Kashiwabara, but had met with trickery and disappointment upon returning to Kashiwabara to discuss the inheritance problem. Comp.Works vol.5 p.125.
41. Hanging on the wall all through the winter, his wicker hat had become covered with soot from the open hearth.

42. Jōraku temple; full name Hōōyama Jōrakuin Chōfukuju temple. A temple of the Tendai Buddhist sect.
43. Kikaku(1661-1707) was a disciple of Bashō from the age of fifteen. He became one of Bashō's most well known disciples. Haiku Jiten p.67.
44. Issa is here alluding to a poem in the Shinkokinshū. Comp.Works p.467.
45. Kiyomizu temple; temple in the Ueno district of Edo. It was a famous spot for viewing the cherry blossoms. Built after the pattern of the more famous temple of the same name in Kyōto.
46. Issa is here quoting from the Ise Monogatari. Comp. Works vol.2. p.467.
47. Issa is implying that Kikaku is the elder brother while he himself is the younger, or that Kikaku is the parent while he himself is the child.
48. Yoshida: Yoshida Kenko, the author of Tsuretsuregusa.
49. Shūshiki; a woman poet, disciple of Kikaku.
50. The harlot of Eguchi was a character in common legend who was supposed to have appeared and made verses with the famous poet Saigyō. Eguchi is a place name in the province of Settsu. Comp.Works vol.2 p.468.
51. The 'old woman of Higaki' is a reference to a female dancer said to have moved from Daizai province in Kyūshū, to Bizen in Okayama prefecture, where she grew old. She is famous for the fact that she made poetry with the poet Fujiwara Okikaze. Comp.Works vol. 2 p.468.
52. Ashibiki is a pillow word and not translatable.
53. This is a quote from Chinese literature of the Tang period. Comp.Works vol.2 p.469.
54. Jōkyō Hall; part of the Kanei temple in Tōkyō.
55. The trellis was built over a well.
56. Awa; originally part of Kazusa province, now part of Chiba prefecture.
57. This was a custom peculiar to the Kantō region.
58. Chōan; Chinese era prior to the Tang period.

59. Comp.Works vol.2 p.210 and 269.
60. Ibid. p.257.
61. Ibid. p.549.
62. Makoto Ikeda. Matsuo Bashō. Kodansha Press. p.61.
The translation is mine.
63. Comp. Works. vol.2 p. 255. 63a. The Japanese p.57 and
153.
64. Ibid. p.565.
65. Ibid. p.568.
66. Kaneko. p.182.
67. Nihonkotenbungakukanshō. vol.32. Buson.Issa.p.286.
68. Masaoka Shiki. 1867 - 1902. The pre-eminent haiku
poet of his age. The history of haiku in Japan
is normally traced, in its general outline, through
the four poets Bashō-Buson-Issa-Shiki.
69. Ito. p.10. 69a. Ito p.6-7.
70. Kuriyama. p.55.
71. Comp. Works vol. 2. p.552
72. Ibid. p.206.
73. Ito. p.39.
74. Comp.Works vol.2 p.433.
75. Ito. p.58.
76. Comp.. Works. vol.2. p.204.
77. Ibid. p.204.
78. Ibid. p.438.
79. Ibid. p.205.
80. Ibid. p.298.
81. Ito. p.237.
82. Brower and Miner. Japanese Court Poetry. Stanford
Press. p.192.
83. Comp. Works. vol.2 p.429.
84. Ibid. p.426.
85. Murata. p.91.
86. The fuller version is Namu-Amida-Butsu and is
translated in The Teaching of Buddha, Bukkyō Dendō
Kyōkai Press. p.218 as 'Whole hearted reliance
upon the Buddha of Infinite Light and Boundless
Life.'
87. Comp.Works. vol.2 p.295.
88. Ibid. p.543.

89. Comp.Works. vol. 2 p.155.
90. Chiyo Ni. (1701 - 1775). A famous woman haiku poet. The Zuisaihikki is Issa's copy in his own hand of a selection of poems from various poets made by Natsume Seibi. It can be found in Comp. Works vol.7 p.14-247.
See also . Nihonbungakukenyūshiryō. Buson.Issa p.279.
91. Ibid p.279.
92. " "
93. " "
94. Comp.Works vol.2 p.553.
95. Modern Hokkaidō.
96. Ito. p.231. Kaneko p.124.
97. Comp.Works vol.2. p.400
98. Motoori Norinaga (1730 - 1801). The probable full name of the work Issa purchased is given in Comp. Works vol.2 p.400. as 'Teniowa Himokagami'.
99. Comp.Works. vol.2 p.260.
100. Nihonbungakukanshō vol.32. p.317.
101. Comp..Works vol.5. p.258.
102. Ibid. p.266 and 274.
103. Kaneko. p.142.
104. Haiku Jiten. p.17.
105. Maruyama. p. 43.
106. Nihonkotenbungakukanshō. vol.32 p.319.
107. Ibid. p.320/1
108. Ibid. p. 321.

Section 4. THE BUNKA PERIOD. Second Half. 1810 - 1817.

Selected Translations.

(a). Nanaban Nikki.

Nanaban Nikki contains some 7300 of Issa's verses covering a period of nine years. It commences on the 1st. Jan. 1810 (Bunka 10th. year) and concludes on the 29th. of Dec. 1818 (originally Bunka 15th. year but later changed to Bunsei period 1st. year).

It is the largest work of Issa's in existence and is complete in that there are no breaks in the nine years that it covers. It is his most famous work and the first to be commonly recognised. There are very few prose passages in the entire work.

The title 'Nanaban Nikki' or in English 'Diary Number Seven' is found on the original copy in Issa's own hand. This is in contrast to most of his other works which were given titles by others at later dates, e.g. 'Bunka Kuchō', 'Kyōwa Kuchō' etc.

This work is of special interest because it covers the period of change from life in Edo to life in Kashiwabara. In it Issa's distinctive style is brought to maturity.

After Issa's death the original copy was in the hands of the Nakamura family of Kashiwabara.. In 1870 the Nakamura home was burned down during a farmers' uprising but the book was saved from the flames and sold to an antique dealer. It was later found in another antique dealer's in

the town of Kanazawa¹ and returned to the Nakamura family.
 The Nakamura family business went bankrupt in 1915/6 and
 the book was auctioned off. It is now in the hands of
 a family named Kosaka.²

Selected Translation.

BUNKA 7th. year. (1810).

4.1. Kado kado no geta no doro yori haru tachinu.

From the mud

On the new wooden sandals

Lined up at the doors of the houses,

The New Year dawns.

4.2. Oi ga mi no nebumi osaruru kesa no haru.

Age,

Like a price tag

Showing one's worth,

On this New Year's morning.³

4.3. Kari okiyo yuki ga tokeru zo tokeru zo yo.

Wild ducks, arise!

The snow is melting,

Look the snow is melting!

4.4. Yuki tokete kurikurishitaru tsuki yo kana.

The snow melts,

So round and clear

The moon this night.

4.5. Tsuitachi ya ichimon no tako mo Edo no sora.

First day of the month

And in the skies of Edo, too,

Penny kites.

- 4.6. Yabui⁴ri ya haka haka no matsu kaze ushiro fuki.

The servants' holiday,
At the graveside
The wind from the pines
Blows from behind.

- 4.7. Chiru hana ya sude ni onore mo kudari saka.

Cherry blossoms fall and scatter,
And I, too, am already
In decline.

- 4.8. Hana saku ya yoku no uki yo no kata sumi ni.

The blossoms flower,
In a little corner
Of this floating world
Of base desires.

- 4.9. Yūzakura kyō mo mukashi ni nari ni keri.

Cherry blossom at eventide.
Today, too,
Becomes the past.

- 4.10. Yoru toshi ya sakura no saku mo ko urusaki.

As the years pass by,
The flowering cherry blossoms, too,
Become a nuisance.

- 4.11. Etā⁵dera no sakura maji maji saki ni keri.

At the temple
In the outcast village
The cherry blossoms
Brightly bloom.

- 4.12. Kojiki ko ga oro oro ogamu hihina⁶ kana.

The beggar's child
 Stands in awe
 Worshipping ill at ease
 Before the festival dolls.

4.13.. Kō ikite iru mo fushigi zo hana no kage.

To be thus alive
 Is itself an amazing thing!
 In the shade of the blossoms.

4.14. Toku kasume toku toku kasume hanachi tori.

Quickly
 Quickly, quickly into the misty distance fly,
 Escaped bird.

4.15. Saku hana ya kono yo sumai mo ima sukoshi.

Flowering blossoms,
 Of life in this world
 There now remains
 But a little.

4.16. Shinijitaku itase itase to sakura kana.

"Get ready to die,
 Get ready to die",
 Say
 The cherry blossoms!

4.17. Oi nureba sakura mo samui bakari kana.

As one grows old
 Cherry blossom viewing, too,
 Simply makes one cold.

4.18. Yoro yoro wa ware mo makenai zo ominaeshi.⁷

Tottering, wavering as if to fall,
 In this respect I'll not be outdone by you!

Maiden flower.

- 4.19. Osanago ya nigi nigi shitaru ume no hana.

The baby,

Little hands clenched with delight,

Plum blossom.

- 4.20. Hito oni yo oni yo to naku ka oya susume.

"Men are devils,

Devils indeed."

Is it thus she cries,

The mother sparrow?

- 4.21. Soramame no hana ni owarete koromogae.

Urged on

By the flowers of the broad-bean,

I change from winter clothes.

- 4.22. Oi nureba tada ka o yaku o tegara kana.

When one gets old

Burning mosquitoes

Is all one's useful for!

- 4.23. Hito oni no naka e sassa to hotaru kana.

In and out the devilish men

He flies in haste,

The firefly.

- 4.24. Sato no ko ya karasu mo majiru hana nidō.

Mingled with the village children,

Crows, too,

Before the flower festooned temple-hall.

- 4.25. Kō iru mo mina gaikotsu zō yūsuzumi.

The people here,

There all nothing but skeletons!

In the cool of the evening.

- 4.26. Ware nanji o matsu koto hisashi hototogisu.
 I waited
 Such a long time
 For you to come,
 O, cuckoo.
- 4.27. Samidare ya mune ni tsukaeru chichibu yama.⁹
 May rains.
 My heart wells up within me,
 Chichibu yama.
- 4.28. Ikameshiki yūdachi kakaru yanagi kana.
 With solemn heaviness
 The evening downpour falls
 Upon the willows.
- 4.29. Hototogisu waga kosui de wa nakari kerī.
 Mountain cuckoo,
 It doesn't belong to you alone,
 The mountain lake.
- 4.30. Suzukaze ya chikara ippai kirigirisu.
 In the cool breeze
 The grasshopper chirps
 With all his might!
- 4.31. Atsuki yo ya Edo no kosumi no herazu kuchi.
 Warm evening.
 In a little corner of Edo city,
 Idle talk.
- 4.32. Ine no ka ya kasai taira no baka ichi ri.¹⁰
 Scent of ripening ears of rice,
 On the Kasai plain
 A mile
 Seems so ridiculously long.

- 4.33. Tōkihina Kosuge¹² no gomon shimari keri.
 Far off the moor-hen cries.
 The gates of the Kosuge estate
 Are closed.
- 4.34. Hito oni o tayori ni shitari hanuke tori.
 Now dependent upon
 Devilish men,
 An injured bird.
- 4.35. Suzukaze wa anata makase zo haka no matsu.¹³
 Cool evening breezes,
 Trusting in the mercy of Buddha,
 Pines by the graveside.
- 4.36. Tsuyu no yo no tsuyu no naka nite kenka kana.
 This world of dew,
 Among its dewdrops
 People quarrelling!
- 4.37. Tsuyubare ya sado¹⁴ no okane ga tōru tote.
 The rainy season ends,
 "Gold from Sado passes through",
 'Tis said.
- 4.38. Asama¹⁵ kara wakarete kuru ya ko yūdachi.
 From the peak of mount Asama,
 It breaks free and comes our way,
 A little evening shower.
- 4.39. Yasegaeru makeru na Issa kore ni ari.¹⁶
 Skinny frog
 Don't give up,
 Issa is here!

- 4.40. Waga yado wa kuchi de fuite mo deru ka kana.
 In my dwelling,
 Just blow with the mouth
 And out come the mosquitoes!
- 4.41. Untsuku ya dotarikoronde are hotaru.
 The clumsy oaf
 Falls down with a thud
 And cries, "Look, fireflies!"
- 4.42. Ako yo koyo korobu mo jōzu yūsuzumi.
 Ah, but when one's own child falls
 He does it so cleverly!
 In the evening coolness.
- 4.43. Rōbai no naru ya ika ni mo yase gaman.
 The old plum tree,
 How it strains
 To produce some blossom!
- 4.44. Kure yuku ya kari to kemuri to hizagashira.
 As the day draws in
 I see
 The wild geese, the smoke
 And my own kneecaps!
- 4.45. Io no i wa te de kaeshoshite shimai keru.
 The well at my dwelling
 With my hand
 I take out the stones to dry
 And the cleaning job is over!
- 4.46. Fundoshi de ase o fuki fuki hanashi kana.¹⁷
 With the loin cloth
 Vigorously wiping away the sweat
 And chatting together

- 4.47. Sarashi i no mikidokuri ya mazu tsuki yo.
 The well is cleaned out
 Now for a jug of rice-wine
 To celebrate,
 Under the evening moon.
- 4.48. ¹⁸
Katashiro ni shirami obusete nagashikeri.
 On the paper image
 The body lice are placed
 And floated away.
- 4.49. Shimogare ya kange hatto¹⁹no yabu no yado.
 Wintry frosts.
 "No soliciting for contributions!"
 On the hut in the thicket.
- 4.50. Nemushiro ni satto shigure no akari kana.
 On my sleeping mat,
 The brightness
 Of the sudden end
 Of the evening shower.
- 4.51. Chiru ko no ha tōse nembutsu tōri keri.
 The leaves fall,
 With invocations to Amida buddha
 I pass by.
- 4.52. Hatsu yuki o imaimashii to yube kana.
 Hatefully it falls
 First snow of winter.
 Eventide.
- 4.53. Hyakuryō no matsu o kenashite nattojiru.
 With a jibe
 At the £1000 pine tree

I sip my soybean soup.

- 4.54. ²⁰
Ariake ya momiji fuki orosu fukutojiru.

Dawn breaks,

Red maple leaves

Are blown from the trees.

Abalone soup.

- 4.55. Hatsu yuki ya sore wa yo ni aru hito no koto.

"Ah, first fall of winter's snow!"

To fondly thus proclaim

Is for those

Who have a living in this world!

- 4.56. Yare tanome tanome to ya, mune age no daiku no
shiri o ogamitsuru kana.

Praying "Please bless me, please bless me."

In the temple, head bowed

To the backside of the carpenter

Fitting the beams!

- 4.57. Yukutoshi ya sora no nagori o moriya²¹ made.

Last skies

Of the passing year have come

As far as Moriya.

BUNKA 8th. year (1811)

- 4.58. Waga haru mo jōjō kichi yo ume no hana.

My New Year, too,

Is the best,

The happiest thus far.

Plum blossoms.

- 4.59. ²²
Hōrai ni namu namu to iu warabe kana.
 Towards "The Island of Eternal Bliss"
 Repeating, "Mercy, mercy upon us",
 The little child prays.
- 4.60. Kabe no ana ya waga hatsu sora mo utsukushiki.
 Through a hole in the wall
 For me, too, the New Year begins
 With beautiful clear skies.
- 4.61. ²³
Ōgoe ya hatsuka sugite no omanzai.
 Loud voices,
 It's past the twentieth
 And still the strolling players
 Celebrate New Year.
- 4.62. ²⁴
Hatsu sora e sashidasu shishi no kashira kana.
 Reaching up,
 Into the New Year sky,
 The head of the ceremonial lion.
- 4.63. Kuwa no e ni uguisu naku ya ko ume mura.
 On the handle of the hoe
 The nightingale sings,
 While plum blossom flowers
 In the little village.
- 4.64. Masayume ya haru sōsō no bimbōgami.
 The dream was true!
 I've met the god of poverty
 Early in the year!
- 4.65. Kisagata ya sakura o abite naku kaeru.
 Ah, Kisagata,
 Where cherry blossoms fall like showers

Upon the croaking frogs.

- 4.66. Seiten ni ubagoe ageru susume kana.

Little sparrows

Whose newborn cries go up

Towards clear skies.

- 4.67. Aka uma no hana de fuki keri susume no ko.

Blown away

By the snorts

Of a working horse,

Little sparrows.

- 4.68. Harusame ni ōakubi suru bijin kana.

In the spring rains

Yawning, mouth agape,

A fair maiden!

- 4.69. Harukaze ya ushi ni hikarete zenkōji.²⁵

Spring breezes.

Pulled by an oxen

To Zenkō temple.

- 4.70. Bushōgami soko noki tamae haru no ame.

Idle gods!

Be pleased to move

Out of the way!

Spring rains.

- 4.71. Tsukihana ya shijūkyunen no muda aruki.

The moon, the blossoms,

Forty nine years

Of useless walking around!

- 4.72. Hana no tsuki no to chinpungan no ukiyo kana.

Of the moon,

Of the blossoms

Of so much stuff-and-nonsense,
This fleeting world.

- 4.73. Yusa yusa to haru ga yuku zo yo nobe no kusa.

Gently,
Gently swaying,
Spring passes over
The grasses of the fields.

- 4.74. Ko arite ya hashi no kojiki mo yobu hotaru.

The beggar under the bridge,
He, too, calls, "Look fireflies!"
Does he have children?

- 4.75. Makari ide sōrō kore wa kankodori.

"Behold, I have now arrived."

I am

The cuckoo!

- 4.76. Natsu no semi shikashi warera ga senja yara.²⁶

The summer cicada,
Could it be
Someone who died
Earlier than we?

- 4.77. Sakazuki ni nomi oyogu zo yo oyogu zo yo.

In the wine cup,
Look, he swims,
He swims indeed!
A flea.

- 4.78. Garigari to take kajiri keri kirigirisu.

Crunch crunch,
Munching bamboo,
A grasshopper!

- 4.79. Amagasa mo higasa mo anata makase kana.
 Umbrella?
 Or parasol?
 Leave it to
 The will of the gods!
- 4.80. Matsushima ya hito kobushi zutsu aki no kure.
 At Matsushima
 Just one isle at a time
 The autumn fades.
- 4.81. Ta no kari ya sato no ninzu wa kyō mo heru.²⁷
 Wild geese in the fields,
 Today, too,
 The village population
 Will decrease.
- 4.82. Baba dono ga sake o nomi ni yuku tsuki yo kana.
 The old women,
 Off to drink rice wine
 On this moonlit night.
- 4.83. Ushiro kara ōsamu kosamu yo samu kana.²⁸
 From behind me the children's voices sing,
 "How cold,
 How not so very cold",
 On this cold night.
- 4.84. Kado no kari ikura naite mo kome wa nai.
 Wild geese at the gate,
 No matter how much you cry
 I have no rice!
- 4.85. Are misai matsu ga sanbon hatsu shigure.
 Just look at that!

Three pine trees
In the first showers of winter.

4.86. Kano momo ga nagare koyo koyo harugasumi.

That peach over there,
Come, come float this way,
Spring mists.

BUNKA 9th. year. 1812

4.87. Onore yare ima ya gojū no hana no haru²⁹

Well, here I am!
Now into my fiftieth
Felicitous New Year!

4.88. Jaja uma no tsukunentoshite kasumu nari.

The frisky horse
Today stands absent-mindedly
Motionless
In the mist.

4.89. Kasumu hi ya kasumu hi ya tote tsuiyashinu.

With, "'Tis a misty day,
'Tis a misty day",
The day itself
Is idled away.

4.90. Kasumu hi ya to bakari kyō mo muda shigoto.

"'Tis a misty day",
Is all that's said
As today, too
Is wasted away.

4.91. Ikigake no dachin ni naku ya ama no kari.

Are they crying

For a parting gift

To help them as they go on their way?

Wild geese in the skies.

4.92. Harutatsu ya komo mo kaburazu gojū nen.³⁰

Spring arrives.

Fifty years

Without the beggar's cape

Upon my head!

4.93. Ko isshaku sore mo kadomatsu nite sōrō.

Hardly a foot high,

Yet it, too, is indeed

A decorative New Year's pine

Standing at the gate.

4.94. Kodarae ya ima muku tanishi suberi asobu.

In the little wooden pail

The edible snails,

Just shelled,

Slide around and play.

4.95. Kasumu hi no hanshi suru yara nobe no uma.

The horses in the pasture,

Do they talk together

About this misty day?

4.96. Matsu kage ni nete kuu rokujū yoshū kana

Over sixty provinces

In which to sleep and eat

In the shade of the pines.

4.97. Asamashi ya tsue ga nanbon oi no matsu.

How pitiful,

The aged pine tree,

Branches held up

With so many staves.

4.98. Naga no hi o ku ya kuwazu ya ike no kame.

A long, long day.

Have I eaten,

Or haven't I?

Turtle in the pond.

4.99. Haji irete harataku naru ya dorobo neko.

Full of shame,

Slinking, low upon the ground,

A thieving cat.

4.100. Yūfuji ni shiri o narabete naku kawazu.

Backside aligned

With Mount Fuji at eventide,

A croaking frog.

4.101. Shōben no taki o mishō zo naku kawazu.

I'll show you shall I,

A veritable waterfall of piss?

Croaking frog.

4.102. Chō no mi mo uro uro yoku no uki yo kana.

The butterfly, too,

Meanders around

In this floating world

Of base desires.

4.103. Kome o maku mo tsumi zo yo tori ga keai ni keri.

Scattering rice is sinful, too!

Look, see how it makes

The birds

Claw and fight for it!

- 4.104. Saku hana no naka ni ugameku shujō kana.
 Among the blossoms
 Twisting, squirming,
 A mass of humanity!
- 4.105. Nodokasa ya hayamikazuki no dete ojiyaru.
 Ah, how tranquil,
 See, it's come out and shining early,
 The three day old
 August moon.
- 4.106. Sujidangi chinpunkan mo nodaka kana.
 The wayside preaching,
 Though I can't make head nor tail of it
 Is somehow peaceful!
- 4.107. Tsui soko no nimon watashi ya haru no tsuki.
 Just over there,
 The twopenny ferry.
 Spring moon.
- 4.108. Fuki no ha ni kata ashi kakete naku kawazu.
 With just one leg
 On the leaf of the butterbur,
 A croaking frog.
- 4.109. Honobono to kojiki no kona mo saki ni keru.
 In the morning haze
 The beggars' little vegetables, too,
 Are blooming.
- 4.110. Na no hana no toppazure nari fuji no yama.
 Small
 Protruding, on the very edge
 Of the field of rape-blossom,
 Mount Fuji.

4.111. Aki kaze ya yoko ni kuruma no koyakunin.

The autumn wind.

At the side of the carriage,

A boy attendant.

4.112. Hanageshi no fuwatsuku yō na maeba kana.

Like poppies

Wavering unsteadily,

My front teeth!

4.113. Kiji naku ya mikaketa yama no aru yō ni.

The pheasant cries

As if the mountain it sees

It recognised.

4.114. Naki haha ya umi miru tabi ni miru tabi ni.

"Ah, my dear dead mother."

Every time,

Yes every time I see the sea.

4.115. Warera gi wa tada yakamashii hototogisu.

Our righteousness,

'Tis nothing but

A noisy mountain cuckoo.

4.116. Mezameshi no botan shakuyaku de arishiyona.³¹

Like a peony

That delighted and surprised

The eye.

4.117. Nani o iu hariai mo nashi keshi no hana.³²

Without the heart

To say a single word

The poppies bloom.

4.118. Io no koke hana saku sube mo shiranu nari.

The moss around my hut,
It doesn't even know
How to flower!

4.119. Doko o oseba sonna oto ga deru yama no shika.

Where does one press you
To produce such a sound?
O mountain deer!

4.120. Yuku kari ya ato wa no to nare hana to nare to.

The wild geese depart
From now the fields will flourish
And flowers bloom.

4.121. Tsuyu no yo ya tsuyu no nadeshiko konadeshiko.

This world of dew,
And wet with dew
A wild pink
A little wild pink.

4.122. Tsuyu no yo ya tsuyu no kowaki no ukaitachi.

In this world of dew,
With birds under their arms
Dripping wet,
Cormorant keepers.

4.123. Chiri akuta hōrubekarazu hasu no hana.

At the sign,
"Throw no rubbish here"
The lotus flower blooms.

4.124. Te no hira no shirami to narabu kōri kana.³³

Alongside the lice
On the palm of my hand
Ice!

- 4.125. Musashino³⁴ ya nomi no yukue mo kumo no mine.
 Musashino!
 The fleas, too,
 Jump up towards
 The towering clouds.
- 4.126. Yugao no hana de hana kamu musume kana.
 With the moon flower
 She blows her nose,
 A young girl.
- 4.127. Iza inan edo wa suzumi mo muzukashiki.
 "Home I'll go"
 For in Edo it is difficult
 Just to get cool.
- 4.128. Mizu umi ni shiri o fukasete semi no naku.
 With his backside to the breeze
 Blowing from the lake,
 The cicada sings.
- 4.129. Yuke hotaru te no naru hō e naru hō e.
 Firefly, off you go
 Towards the sound of clapping hands
 Towards the clapping hands.
- 4.130. Kakuregaya nan no kozu tomo yoi hotaru.
 Lonely hut,
 No matter
 If no one comes at all
 The fireflies are here.
- 4.131. Yuki yuke yuke miyako no tawake machi oran.
 Go snow, go away!
 It seems the idiots in the capital
 Are waiting for you!!

- 4.132. Yuki chiru ya kinō wa mienu shakuya fuda.
 Snow flutters down
 And lo, a "House for Rent" sign
 That wasn't there yesterday.
- 4.133. Kisagata no kake o kazoete naku chidori.³⁵
 At Kisagata
 Counting the damaged places
 The plover cries.
- 4.134. Arare chire kukuri makura o ou kodomo.
 Down falls the sleet.
 Stuffed pillow tied behind her back,
 A child without a doll.
- 4.135. Jū bakari he o sute ni deru yo naga kana.
 Outside
 To fart for the tenth time
 On this long sleepless night!
- 4.136. Toru toshi mo anata makase zo yuki hotoke.
 Another year of life,
 This one, too, I'll leave to the mercy of the gods
 O, little stone Buddha covered with snow.
- 4.137. Tama matsu³⁶ru kusa sae motanu sumai kana.
 A home
 Without even a green herb to offer
 The souls of the dead.
- 4.138. Ariake ya asama no kiri ga zen o hau.
 Dawn breaks
 And mist from mount Asama
 Creeps over my tray.
- 4.139. Kyō kara wa nihon no kari zo raku ni neyo.
 From today

You are geese of Japan

So sleep in peace!

4.140. Yo no naka wa kuneri hatto zo ominaeshi.

In this world

To be bent and crooked

Is not allowed you know,

Maiden flower.

4.141. Kari waya waya ore ga uwasa o itasu kana.

The geese cackle on,

As if spreading rumours

About me!

4.142. Asagao no hana de fukitaru iori kana.

Over the roof

Flower the morning glories.

A humble dwelling.

4.143. Kirikirishantoshite saku kikyō kana.

With sharp dignified beauty

The purple broadbell flowers

Bloom.

4.144. Kashimashi ya shōgun sama no kari ja tote.

What a noise they make,

Squawking, cackling

"We are the shogun's

Geese."

4.145. Ari yō wa samui bakari zo hatsu shigure.

It seems to me

That its just downright cold!

First winter showers.

4.146. Kagerō ya en kara korori neboke neko.

Spring haze,

And from the veranda falls
The drowsing cat.

4.147. Waga haru mo jō jō kichi yo kesa no sora.

My New Year, too,
Is the best,
The happiest thus far.
The sky this morning.

4.148. Manzai ya uma no shiri e mo hito iwai.³⁷

The strolling comic dancers
Give a felicitious little jig
Even to
The backside of the horse!

4.149. Nan no sono hana ga sakō to sakumai to.

What on earth does it really matter,
If the cherry blossoms bloom
Or if they don't!?

4.150. Kamo mo na mo tanto na mura no mijimesa yo.³⁸

Ducks and drakes
And vegetables aplenty,
Yet how wretched
The little village is.

4.151. Sato kagura futokoro no ko mo te o tataku.

The village shrine,
The sacred music and miming dance.
The baby bundled warmly to his mother's bosom:
Also claps his little hands.

4.152. Bakazō mo hito yaku suru ya sato kagura.

Even the village idiot
Has a part to play
In the sacred pantomime

At the village shrine.

4.153. Yūtsuki ya osusu no sugishi zenkōji.³⁹

The evening moon.

The annual soot cleaning

Is now over

At Zenkō temple.

4.154. Kore ga mā tsui no sumika yuki go shaku.

Well, this is it,

A home at last,

But under five feet of snow!

4.155. Hochi hochi to yuki ni kurumaru zaisho kana.

Surrounded by snow

In quiet

Deep abundance,

My dwelling place.

4.156. Seki soro ya nana shaku satte koseki soro.

The travelling minstrels dance and beg,

Move on but seven feet or so

Then dance and beg again.

4.157. Shinanoji no yama ga ni ni naru samusa kana.

Mountains

On Shinano roads

Bare their burdens

Of coldness..

4.158. Mozu no koe kannin bukuro yabureta ka.

The shrike shrieks.

Did its store of patience

Finally come to an end?

4.159. Ware ni nite chiribeta naru ya kado no hana.

Just like me,

Hanging on the branch too long,
Blossoms at the gate.

BUNKA 10th. year. 1813.

4.160. Surigoki no yō na haguki mo hana no haru.⁴⁰

My gums
Though now like wooden pestles
Also greet
The felicitous New Year.

4.161. Kakuregaya ha no nai kuchi de fuku wa uchi.⁴¹

My lonely hut.
With my toothless mouth I say,
"May blessings be within my house".

4.162. Kasumu yara me ga kasumu yara kotoshi kara.

Growing dim,
My eyes are growing dim
From this year on.

4.163. Aka tsume ya nazuna no mae mo hazukashiki.

Dirty finger nails,
Even before the shepherd's purse
I feel ashamed.

4.164. Shinanoji ya yuki ga kiyureba ka ga sawagu.

On Shinano roads,
When the snow melts away
The mosquitoes swarm!

4.165. Muki muki ni kaeru no itoko hatoko kana.

Facing in all directions

Frogs,

First and second cousins all!

4.166. Yūzen toshite yama o miru kaeru kana.

Motionless, perfectly composed,

Gazing at the mountain,

A frog.

4.167. Bokire de tsutsuite oku ya io no hatake.

With a piece of broken stick,

I just poke at it here and there,

My vegetable patch.

4.168. Waga yado wa nani mo nai zo sudachi tori.

My humble dwelling,

There's nothing here at all for you

Little fledgling birds.

4.169. Harusame ya kuwarenokori no kamo ga naku.

Spring rains.

The wild ducks not yet eaten

Give voice.

4.170. Harukaze ya nezumi no nameru sumidagawa.⁴²

Spring breezes.

A rat laps the water

Of the Sumida River.

4.171. Nishiyama ya onore ga noru wa dono kasumi.

The mountains in the west,

Which of the mists

Will be the one I ride upon?

4.172. Nakuna kodomo akai kasumi ga naku naru zo.

Don't cry little child

The red mists

Will soon go away.

4.173. Machi machi shi sakura to naredo hitori kana.

Long awaited
The cherry blossom flowers
But I view them alone.

4.174. Io no yuki heta ni kienō shitari keru.

The snow round my hut,
What a poor job it makes
Of melting away.

4.175. Hyakuryō no uguisu mo yare oi o naku.

The £100 nightingale,
It, too,
Sings of getting old!

4.176. Samurai ya uguisu ni made tsukawaruru.⁴³

The samurai
Serves
Even the nightingale.

4.177. Yanagi kara momonguwa tote deru kodomo.⁴⁴

From under the willow tree
Crying, "A flying squirrel"
The children flee.

4.178. Ume saku ya inu ni matagaru momotarō.⁴⁵

The plum tree blossoms
And riding a dog,
Momotarō.

⁴⁶
4.179. Shitaya ichiban no kao shite koromogae.

With a look on my face
As if I were the very first to do so in Shitaya
I make the seasonal change of garments.

4.180. Tsuyu chirite kyū ni mijikaku naru yo kana.

The dew falls
And suddenly
The nights are shorter.

4.181. Otonashiku rusu o shite iro kirigirisu.

Quietly now,
Just you stay home
And look after the house,
Mr. Cricket!

4.182. Semi naku ya waga ya mo ishi ni naru yō ni 46^a

The cicada sings
As if to turn
My house, too,
To stone.

4.183. Nomi no ato sore mo wakaki wa utsukushiki.

On a young woman
The bites of a flea
Are also beautiful.

4.184. Muda kumo ya muda yama tsukuru mata tsukuru.

Useless clouds
Form one useless peak
And then another.

4.185. Nomi hae ni anadoraretsutsu kyo mo kurenu.

Ridiculed
By the flies and fleas
I see this day, too,
Draw to a close.

4.186. Ariake ya fuji e fuji e to nomi no tobu.

Dawn breaks.
Towards Fuji, up towards mount Fuji

The fleas hop!

- 4.187. Nani mo nai ga kokoro yasusa yo suzushisa yo.

Not a thing have I

But a heart at ease

And the coolness.

- 4.188. Bashō ō no sune o kajitte yū suzumi.

Making a living

Off the old master Bashō,

In the cool of the evening.

- 4.189. Kodomora⁴⁷ ga danjurō suru uchiwa kana.

The children

Mimicking the actor Danjurō

With their fans.

- 4.190. Bōfura ya hi ni ikutabi no ukishizumi

Mosquito larvae,

All day, time after time,

Up they float

And down they sink again.

- 4.191. Dai no ji ni nete suzushisa yo sabishisa yo.⁴⁸

Lying

Arms outstretched

Legs flung open wide.

Oh, how cool

Oh, how lonely!

- 4.192. Ikuna hotaru miyako wa yoru no yakamashiki.

Firefly, don't go!

Even at night the capital

Is full of noise and bustle.

- 4.193. Yū tsuki ya ōhada nuide katatsumuri.

The evening moon

Stretching far out of his shell,
The snail.

- 4.194. Ge ge mo ge ge ge ge no gekoku no suzushisa yo.⁴⁹

Ah, this is the coolness of
The deeper yet deeper
Yet deeper yet deeper depths
Of the remotest countryside in all the land!

- 4.195. Nigeru nari shimi ga naka nimo oya yo ko yo.

Even among the silverfish moths
As they make their escape
Are mothers and children, too.

- 4.196. Hito kitara kaeru to nare yo hiyashi uri.

If anyone comes
Turn into a frog!
Cooled melon.

- 4.197. Nagedashita ashi no saki nari kumo no mine.

At the end
Of my outstretched legs
The towering clouds.

- 4.198. Kawagari ya jizō no hiza no kowakisashi.

In the river fishing,
While on the knees of the little stone idol
The dirk is laid.

- 4.199. Yama sato wa shiru no naka made meigetsu zo.

The mountain village,
Where the bright full-moon reflects
Even in the bowl of soup.

- 4.200. Masayume ya tsui niwa kakaru aki no kure.⁵⁰

The dream was true
And now so soon we have

The close of autumn.

4.201. Utsukushi ya shōji no ana no ama no kawa.

How beautiful,
Seen through a hole
In the paper screen,
The Milky Way.

4.202. Tsuyu chiru ya ore ni onore mo ano tōri.

The dew drops fall
And thus it will be
With me and mine.

4.203. Iraba ima zo kusaba no kage mo hana ni hana.

If you are going to the grave
Then now's the time
For over the earth
The flowers bloom.

4.204. Shinigami ni yorinokozarete aki no kure.

Still here
Not yet taken by The Reaper.
Autumn draws in.

4.205. Nomi domo ga sazo yonaga daro sabishikaro.

Perhaps for the fleas, too,
The night is long
And lonely.

4.206. Meigetsu ya nenagara ogamu teitaraku.

Things are such that I
Can lay on my back and gaze up
At the full autumn moon.

4.207. Ano tsuki o totte kurero to naku ko kana.

"Pluck that moon
And give it to me."

So sobs the child.

4.208. Geta karari karari yo naga no yatsura kana.

Clackety clack, clackety clack,

The wooden sandals

Of walkers

On this long night.

4.209. Nagai zo yo .yo ga nagai zo yo namu amida.⁵¹

How long,

How very long it is

This night.

"Save us merciful Buddha".

4.210. Abarabone nadeji to suredo yo samui kana.⁵²

Protruding ribs,

I do not rub them.

Oh, how cold it is.

4.211. Aki kaze ni aruite nigeru hotaru kana.

In the autumn wind

Walking, trying to get away,

A firefly.

4.212. Nagaki yo ya kokoro no oni ga mi o semeru.

The long night,

Within my breast

The stings of conscience.

4.213. Aki no semi tsuku tsuku samushi samushi to na.

The autumn cicada,

He chirps

"How cold it is, how cold it is."

4.214. Yukisaki mo tada akikaze zo kojunrei.

Up ahead

There's just the autumn wind,

That's all

Little pilgrims.

4.215. Asa asa ya cha ga umaku naru shimo oriru.

Morning by morning

Hot tea becomes more tasty

As the frost falls.

4.216. Hirowarenu kuri no migoto yo ōkisa yo.⁵³

The chestnuts

We are forbidden to gather,

How good they look

And Oh! how big!

4.217. Issabo ni sugitaru mono ya sumi ippyō.

For master Issa

It is just too much of a luxury,

A whole sack of charcoal.

4.218. Ochibashite kerori to tachishi dozō kana.

The leaves fall

And standing

Plain for all to see,

The storehouse.

4.219. Kimi ga yo no toppazure nari ukinedori.

The emperor reigns,

And on the very edge of his dominion

The floating waterfowl

Sleeps.

4.220. Hito oni ikidōru ka yo fugu no kao.

Does it look

With indignant anger

At us evil men?

The face of the blowfish!

4.221. Asabare ni pachi pachi sumi no kigen kana.

Clear bright morning.

Crackle crackle,

Is that the charcoal

Feeling good?

4.222. Fukumame ya fuku umeboshi ya hani awanu.

The goodluck beans,

The pickled plums of blessing, too,

Are not so

To toothless me!

4.223. Umasō na yuki ga fūwari fuwari kana.

Delicious looking snow

Falls softly

So softly down.

4.224. Shimogare ya kabe no ushiro wa echigo yama.⁵⁴

Wintry bleakness,

On the other side of the wall

The mountains of Echigo.

4.225. Anata makase makase zo toshi wa inu mo tori.

I'll entrust myself

Yes entrust myself to the mercy of Buddha

For even the dogs

Grow older.

4.226. Fukuro yo nohohon tokoro ka toshi no kure.

Mister owl!

Are you sure you have time

To just "Hoot hoot" away?

The year draws in.

4.227. Daimon ya kara modori suru kannenbutsu.

From the great temple gate
 Returning empty handed,
 Midwinter prayers.

4.228. Yuku toshi ya nani o ijimuji yū chidori.

The year passes,
 And what are you clucking about?
 Plover at eventide.

4.229. Ako ga mochi ako ga mochi tote narabe keru.

"This is my rice cake
 And this one, too, is my rice cake."
 So saying, the child
 Lines them up.

BUNKA 11th. year. 1814.

4.230. Kado no ki no ahō karasu mo hatsu koe zo.⁵⁵

In the tree at the gate
 The stupid crow, too,
 Gives out his first caws
 On this New Year's Day.

4.231. Assari to haru wa ki ni keru asagi sora.

With bright clarity
 The New Year dawns.
 Pale blue skies.

4.232. Yuki tokete mura ippai no kodomo kana.

The snow melts
 The village streets are filled
 With children.

4.233. Yogore yuki sore mo kiyuru ga iyajagena.

Dirty snow,

It, too, seems reluctant
To fade away.

4.234. Chisai no wa ore ga zaisho no dondo kana.

See the small one
The small New Year's pine decoration,
That's the one
Outside my dwelling.

4.235. Sakura saku dai nippon zo nippon zo.

The cherry blossoms flower!
'Tis great Japan,
Great Japan indeed!

4.236. Hima are ya sakura kazashite kenka kau.

Time on his hands,
Cherry blossom in his hair,
Looking for a fight.

4.237. Waga sato wa do kasunde mo ibitsu nari.

My old home town,
Whatever mists enfold it
It never looks right!

4.238. Yabujiri no saisenbako ya haru no ame.

On the edge of the thicket
A temple offertory chest
In the spring rains.

4.239. Hitogoe ni bottoshita yara yūzakura.

At the sound of voices,
Startled into blooming wider still,
Evening cherry blossom.

4.240. Ariyō wa ware mo hana yori dango kana.

To tell the truth
I, too,

Prefer dumplings to flowers!

4.241. Yū keburī ya kusa no hazure no haru no ame.

Steam from the hot spring

And on the edge of the moor

Spring rains.

4.242. Uguisu ya inaka mawari ga raku danbei.

Bush warbler,

Is it an easy life

Wandering around the countryside?

4.243. Hana sumire gamushara inu ni nerare kerī.

Flowering violets

Recklessly slept upon

By a dog.

4.244. Ōtako no rintoshite aru higure kana.

The enormous paper kite,

Clearly magnificent

In the evening sky.

4.245. Ōedo no sumi no kozumi no sakura kana.

The cherry blossoms

In a little corner

Of a corner

Of the great city of Edo.

4.246. Yayo shirami hae hae haru no ikuhō e.

Quickly, quickly

You lice

Crawl, crawl

After the departing spring.

4.247. Hari hodo no na no hana sakinu yare sakinu.

The size of a pinhead

A rapeflower bloom,

Yes blooms at last.

4.248. Ao koke ya hiza no ue made haru no niiji.

Fresh green moss

And rising up over my knees

A spring rainbow.

4.249. Koyo hotaru ippon kusa mo yoru no tsuyu.

Come firefly come,

Upon even this one blade of grass

There is evening dew.

4.250. Kagashira no ana kara miyuru miyako kana.

Through a gap

In the swarms of mosquitoes

I see the capital.

4.251. Hosotake mo wakawakashisa yo yukashisa yo.

The slender bamboo,

Ah how fresh and green,

Ah how delightful.

4.252. Yūdachi ya sanmon hana mo sore soyogu.

Evening downpour,

The threepenny flower

Also sways and bends.

4.253. Muda kumo ya muda yama tsukuru kyō mo mata.

The useless clouds

Make useless mountain shapes

Again today!

4.254. Waga mon e shiranande hairu kawazu kana.

Through my gate,

Unaware that its is mine,

A frog crawls in.

4.255. Ukareneko kimyō ni asete mairikeri.

Searching for a mate,
 With curious impatience
 Comes a cat.

4.256. Shiraga dōshi haru o oshimu bakarashi ya.

Two grey-haired men
 Mourning the parting of the spring
 Is foolishness.

4.257. Asagao mo zeni dake hiraku ukiyo kana.

Even the morning glory
 Opens only for money
 In this floating world.

4.258. No bakuchi ya zeni no naka naru kirigirisu.

Gambling in the fields,
 And amidst the coins
 Chirps a grasshopper!

4.259. Fundoshi ni fue tsutsu sashite hoshi aogu.

With a flute
 Stuck in his loincloth
 Stargazing.

4.260. Waga mon no heta hataoriyomushi ni made.

Within my gate
 Nothings really very good,
 Even the grasshopper
 Doesn't chirp well!

4.261. Yama ni yuki furu tote mimi no nari ni keri.

'Tis said that
 Snow is falling on the mountains,
 And in my ears
 A ringing noise.

4.262. Mihotoke no mihana no saki e tsurara kana.

From the holy nose
Of the holy stone Buddha,
An icicle.

4.263. Haru kaze ya omiyabito no noetchin.⁵⁷

Spring breezes.
The high-court noble
Performs his toilet in the field.

4.264. Hatsu yuki o miyo ya yakko ga shiri no saki.⁵⁸

Backside of the serving man,
You, too, now
Take a look
At the first fall of winter snow.

4.265. Rōhachi⁵⁹ ya ware to onajiku hone to kawa.

The fasting priest
The same as I
Just skin and bones.

4.266. Ukenamako buppōrufu no yo naru zo yo.

The law of the Buddha
Spreads far and wide throughout this world,
See, even the sea cucumber
Floats up to hear!

4.267. Honobono to akashi⁶⁰ ga ura no namako kana.

In the faint morning light
At the bay of Akashi,
A sea cucumber.

4.268. Mokuboji wa hedo darake nari kyō no tsuki.⁶¹

Mokubo temple,
Vomit, all over the place,
The moon tonight.

4.269. Makenu ki ya anna kogusa mo hana ga saku.

What spirit!

From a small weed like that

A flower blooms.

4.270. Inatsuma o abisekakeru ya shinigirai.

Showered with lightning

People

Not wishing to die!

4.271. Inatsuma ya ukkarihyontoshita kao e.

Lightning flashes

On a blank and startled

Face.

4.272. Mozu yo mozu pinchan suru na kakaru yo ni.

Shrike, hey shrike,

Such swift and violent movements

Are not allowed

In this world of ours!

4.273. Edo edo to edo e itsureba aki no kure.

To Edo, to Edo,

When I went to Edo

Autumn drew in.

4.274. Kuyo kuyo to sawagu na asa wa asa no tsuyu.

Don't distress yourself

With fret and worry,

Tomorrow will bring

Tomorrow's dew.

4.275. Aozora ni yubi de ji o kaku aki no kure.

Writing Chinese characters

With my fingertip

In the clear blue sky

As autumn draws in.

- 4.276. Nō nakute koume ni sunde biwa no hana.⁶²

With no talent to speak of,

Living in Koume,

Loquat flowers.

- 4.275. Wara tsuto wa tekkiri fugu de arishi yo na.

Straw package,

In it I bet

There's a blowfish!

- 4.278. Fugujiru ya hashira to ware to fuji no yama.

Blowfish soup.

Just me, the pillar

And Mount Fuji.

- 4.279. Daiko⁶³ hiki daiko de michi oshiekeri.

The raddish picker

With a long white raddish

Points the way.

BUNKA 12th. year. 1815.

- 4.280. Fukurō yo tsuraguse naose haru no ame.⁶⁴

Owl!

For goodness sake do something

To improve your face!

Spring rains.

- 4.281. Kagerō ya kitsune no ana no aka meshi.⁶⁵

Spring haze.

At the mouth of the foxhole,

Red rice.

4.282. Yokogasumi taranu tokoro ga waga ie zo.

Low lying mist,
 Just where there isn't any,
 Just there is my house!

4.283. Nehanzō zenī mite ohasu kao mo ari.

Picture of the death of Buddha
 Surrounded by his disciples
 Among whom is the face of one
 Looking at money!

4.284. Meigetsu ya nishi ni mukaeba zenkōji.

Full autumn moon,
 Towards the west
 Zenkō temple.

4.285. Ora ga yo ya sokora no kusa mo mochi ni naru.⁶⁶

In this world of mine
 The plants over there, too,
 Will be mixed with rice cakes!

4.286. Rōsoku de tobako suikeri hototogisu.

By the flame of the candle
 I light my pipe
 And the cuckoo sings.

4.287. Hebi ni naru keiko ni kuneru yanagi kana.

Twisting, twirling
 As if practising to become snakes
 The willow branches.

4.288. Nokoru yuki susume ni made mo naburaruru.

Patches of unthawed snow,
 Even the sparrows
 Make light of it.

- 4.289. Kōbai ni hoshite oku nari arai neko.⁶⁷

In the flowering plum tree

Hung out to dry,

A washed cat!

- 4.290. Rusu ni suru zo koishite asobe io no hae.

Look after things while I'm out,

Play, make love,

Flies in my house.

- 4.291. Fuki no ha ni ponto ana hiraku atsusa kana.

So hot,

Hot enough to open a wide hole

In the leaf of the butterbur!

- 4.292. Yū suzumi ya ashi de kazoeru echigo yama.

Evening coolness,

With my toes I count

The mountains of Echigo.

- 4.293. Waga ue ni yagate sakuran koke no hana.

Over me, too,

Finally one day it will bloom,

The flowering moss.

- 4.294. Hito no yo no zen ni sarekeri koke shimizu.

In this world of men

It is used to make money,

Clear water

From a moss-covered spring.

- 4.295. Take no ko unpu tenpu no shusshō kana.⁶⁸

Heaven decides

Where they spring forth,

For good or for ill ,

The bamboo shoots.

- 4.296. Ikadashi ga meshi ni kaketaru hotaru kana.
 The raftman poles
 While on his lunch of rice,
 A firefly!
- 4.297. Shoben no taki miseo zo koyo hotaru.
 I'll show you how
 I can piddle a waterfall.
 Come here, firefly,
 Come and see.
- 4.298. Yabukage ya tatta hitori no taue uta.
 In the shade of the thicket,
 Just one person alone,
 Sings rice planting songs.
- 4.299. Yūdachi ya usu ni futatsubu mi ni mitsubu.
 Evening downpour.
 Two spots on the burstone,
 Three on the winnow.
- 4.300. Suzukaze no magari kunette kitari ker⁶⁹i.
 The cool breeze,
 Turning and meandering in and out,
 It comes.
- 4.301. Uodomo wa oke to shirade ya yū suzumi.
 Fishes,
 Unaware that they are in a pail,
 In the evening coolness.
- 4.302. Toshi toeba kata te hirogeru tanagyō kana.
 Asked his age
 The child stretches out
 The fingers of one hand.
 Priest at the family altar.

4.303. Toshigami ya mata mo osewa ni narimasuru.

God of the years,
 Here I am again
 For another year
 Under your care!

4.304. Ibitsu demo tsuyu no shiradama shiradama zo.

Though misshapen
 A silver dewdrop
 Is a silver dewdrop!

4.305. Tōrō ga katade kaketari tsurugane ni.

The praying mantis,
 Suspended by one hand
 From the hanging bell.

4.306. Dota bata wa baba ga kinuta to shirarekeri.

Flip flop, flip flop,
 Just by the sound we know
 It's an old granny
 At the fulling block.

4.307. Tsure no nai kari yo koyo koyo yado kasan.

Companionless wild goose
 Come, come here,
 You can use
 My house.

4.308. Saboten ni do da to kuraru hechima kana.

The long slender gourd
 Hangs down as if bragging,
 "Well now, what do you think of me then?"
 To the cactus!

4.309. Waga kiku ya nari nimo furi nimo kamawazu ni.⁷⁰

My chrysanthemum,
For her shape
Or her appearance
She pays no heed.

4.310. Uramachi wa inu no kōka mo hatsu yuki.

In the backstreets,
Upon the droppings of a dog,
First fall of winter snow.

4.311. Taku hodo wa kaze ga kuretaru ochiba kana.

The wind brings
Just enough
To start the fire,
Fallen leaves.

4.312. Neko no ko ga choito osaeru ochiba kana.

The kitten
Holds down just a few
Fallen leaves.

4.313. Mikagirishi furusato no sakura saki ni keru.

At the old home town
I had forsaken,
The cherry blossoms bloom.

4.314. Ume no ki no aru kao mo senu yamaga kana.

Without even putting on a face
As if it had a plum tree by its side,
A mountain cottage!

BUNKA 13th. year. 1816.

4.315. Waga kuni wa saru mo eboshi o kaburi keri.⁷¹

In our country
Even the monkey
Wears a courtier's cap!

4.316. Heta moe wa ore ga kazari zo kazari zo yo.⁷²

The one not burning well,
That's my New Year pine decoration,
Yes, that's the one!

4.317. Nonosama ni shiri tsunmukete naku kawazu.

Thrusting his backside
Towards the man-in-the-moon,
A croaking frog.

4.318. Oi no mi wa hi no nagai nimo namida kana.

For the aged
The long days, too,
Bring tears.

4.319. Otoroe ya mita wake ni suru yamazakura.

Weak with age,
Pretending to have seen
The mountain cherry blossoms.

4.320. Kourusai ya yama no sakura mo hyōbanki.

What trivial nonsense,
An order of merit
For mountains and their cherry blossoms!

4.321. Medetasa wa kotoshi no ka nimo kuwarikeri.

A blessing it is
To be bitten
By this year's mosquitoes, too!

- 4.322. Yasegaeru makeruna Issa kore ni ari.⁷³
 Skinny frog
 Don't give up
 Issa is here!
- 4.323. Wanpaku ya shibarenagara yobu hotaru.
 The naughty boy
 Undaunted,
 Though tied to a tree
 He calls the fireflies!
- 4.324. Suzukaze no fuku ki e shibaru waga ko kana.
 Tied,
 But to a tree
 Upon which cool breezes blow,
 Our child.
- 4.325. Imo ga ko wa homugi no kaze ni futorikeri.
 My wife and child
 In the breezes
 From the ripened wheat fields
 Grow fat.
- 4.326. Oikeru na ōgizukai no kozewashiki.
 Growing old,
 Using the fan
 With a quickened motion.
- 4.327. Kado no yabu ka no deru nomi ichi gei zo.
 The bushes at my gate,
 All they are good for
 Is producing mosquitoes.
- 4.328. Nemushiro ya shiri o kazoete yuku hotaru.
 Straw sleeping mats,

Counting backsides

The firefly

Flies by!

4.329. Namajii ni akai wakaba no sabishisa yo.

Thoughtlessly blooming,

Young red leaves, too,

Look so lonely.

4.330. Fuki no ha ni iwashi o kubaru taue uta.⁷⁴

Handing out sardines

From the leaf of the butterbur.

Rice planting songs.

4.331. ⁷⁵Musashino ya suzumu kusa sae nushi ga ari.

Musashino.

Even the grass

I sit upon to cool myself

Belongs to someone!

4.332. Rin rin to tako agarikeri aotabara.

Up it rises,

Large, majestic,

The paper kite

Above the fresh green fields.

4.333. Hasu saku ya hachimon chazuke nihachi soba.

The lotus flower blooms.

Rice and tea for eightpence,

Buckwheat noodles for two and fourpence!

4.334. Samurai ni hae o owasuru ouma kana.

The samurai

Chases the flies

From the master's horse.

4.335. Surikogi de hae o oikeri tororojiru.

With the pestle,
Chasing the flies away,
Mashed yam soup.

4.336. Hatsu awase nikumarezakari ni hayaku nare.⁷⁵

First kimono.
May the time when he will be
At the height of naughtiness
Come quickly.

4.337. Shikararete mata tsukare u no iri ni keru.

With a scolding
The tired cormorant
Is put back
Into the river again.

4.338. Negaeri suru zo soko noke kirigirisu.

I'm going to turn over in my bed,
Quick now, get out of the way
Mr. Cricket!

4.339. Fushigi naru umarete ie de kyō no tsuki.

How strange and wonderful
The moon tonight,
Over this the house
Where I was born.

4.340. Ao noke ni nete naki ni keru aki no semi.

Lying face up
On the ground
Chirping yet
The dying autumn cicada.

4.341. Aki kaze no tamato ni sugaru kochō kana.

In the autumn wind,

Clinging to the long kimono sleeve,
A little butterfly.

4.342. Aki kaze ya tori naku ie no teppen ni.

In the autumn wind
The rooster crows
From the rooftop of the house.

4.343. Hirumeshi o burasagete iru kagashi kana.

The noon lunches
Dangling from him,
The scarecrow!

4.344. Yamakiri no ashi ni karamaru higure kana.

The mountain mists
Twirling, twisting, round my feet
As the day draws in.

4.345. Daibutsu ya hana no ana kara kiri ga deru.

Great image of Buddha,
Out of his nose
Floats some mist!

4.346. Shibu kaki o hamu wa karasu no mama ko kana.

The crow given
The puckery persimmon to eat,
Is that one
A step child?

4.347. Hazukashiya ore ga kokoro to aki no sora.

How ashamed I am!
My heart
And the autumn sky.

4.348. Karegusa to hitotsu iro naru koie kana.

Colours blending into one,

The withered grasses
And the little house.

4.349. Mamakko ga te narai o suru ko no ha kana.

The step-child
Practises his letters
Among the fallen leaves.

4.350. Takegire de te narai o suru mama ko kana.

Practising his letters
With a piece of bamboo stick,
The step-child.

4.351. Toshi no uchi ni haru wa ki ni keru iranu sewa.⁷⁶

Before the old year ends
The new year arrives:
An unwelcome blessing!

4.352. Shimogare ya kome kurero tote naku susume.

Frosty winter bleakness,
"Come now, give me some grains of rice",
Chirps the sparrow.

4.353. Hane haete zeni ga tobu nari toshi no kure.

Sprouting wings,
Money just up and flies away
As the year draws in.

BUNKA 14th. year. 1817.

4.354. Oya susume mite ite kodomo torarekeri.

The parent sparrow watches
While the little ones
Are taken away.

4.355. Haru tatsu ya ushi nimo uma nimo fumarezu ni.

Spring arrives

Yet untrampled on

By ox or horse.

4.356. Kasa de suru saraba saraba ya usugasumi.

Wicker hat in hand

Waving "Goodbye, goodbye",

Into the light mist.

4.357. Uguisu mo soete gomon no chadai kana.

With the nightingale's song

Tea

Five pennies a cup.

4.358. Suzuman to dereba shita ni shita ni kana.⁷⁷

On going out

To cool oneself,

"Get down, get down!"

4.359. Tsuki sasu ya kami no kaya demo ore ga ie.

Moonlight shines in,

Even though my mosquito net

Is made of paper,

This is my own house!

4.360. Tsuyu no yo wa tokushin nagara sarinagara.

This world a world of dew,

Of this I am convinced,

And yet and yet....

4.361. Ushiro kara fuito kōsha na yabu ka kana.

From behind

With speed and lightness

The skilful

Mosquito!

- 4.362. Sokusai de ome ni kakaru zo kusa no tsuyu.⁷⁸

Here I am healthy,
Here to meet you.
Dew on the grasses.

- 4.363. Waga yado to iu bakari demo suzushisa yo.

Makes me cool
Just to say
This is my own house.

- 4.364. Waga io wa tsuyu no tama sae ibitsu nari.

At my dwelling
Even the dewdrops
Are not quite right!

- 4.365. Uba suteta yatsu mo are miyo kusa no tsuyu.⁷⁹

Hey!you fellows
Who have discarded old grannies
And left them to die,
Look at that!
Dew on the grasses.

- 4.366. Ningen nakuba magaraji kiku no hana.

If it were not for man
They wouldn't be so crooked,
Chrysanthemums.

- 4.367. Waga kado ya itsuchi mijime na yukibotoke.

At the gate of my house,
The most miserable of all
Little snowmen!

- 4.368. Ochiba shite hinata ni yoishi kozō kana.

Among the fallen leaves,
Delighting in the patch of sunshine,
Little boy-priest.

- 4.369. Otoroe ya hana o oru nimo kuchi magaru.
 Getting weaker,
 Even to snap off a flower
 I grit my teeth.
- 4.370. Urakabe ya shigami tsuketaru bimbo yuki.
 To the back wall
 Clinging, left behind,
 Destitute snow!
- 4.371. Shimogarete shōji no hae no kawayusa yo.
 Frosty bleakness.
 Ah! how nice to see
 A fly
 On the white paper-covered door.
- 4.372. Yuki chiru ya shikamo shinano no oku shinano.
 Snow flutters down,
 But in Shinano,
 In the depths of Shinano!
- 4.373. Furusato wa samusa mo igochi waruki kana.
 My old home town,
 Even the coldness itself
 Doesn't seem to feel at home!
- 4.374. Mamakko ya yubi o kuwaete yuki shigure.
 The step-child,
 Fingers in his mouth
 Goes by
 In the early winter drizzle.
- 4.375. Kogarashi ya ko no ha ni kurumu shiozakana.
 Cold winter wind.
 Wrapped in the leaves of a tree,
 Dried salted fish.

BUNKA 15th. year. 1818.

4.376. Tsuki chirari uguisu chirari yo wa akenu.

A glance at the fading moon,
The sound of a distant nightingale,
Dawn breaks.

4.377. Dondo yaki dondo to yuki no furi ni keru.

The New Year pine decorations blaze
As the snow falls
More heavily down.

4.378. Waga yanagi shidaruru gei wa nakari keru.

My willow tree
Knows not the art
Of drooping well!

4.379. Tsukubane no kudaru kiwa nari mikka no tsuki.

On the very edge
Of the lower slope
Of Mount Tsukuba,
The new moon.

4.380. Ume doko ka ni gatsu no yuki no ni san shaku.

Where's the plum blossom?
February snows,
Yet two or three feet deep!

4.381. Harusame ya shitataka zeni no deta mado e.

Heavy spring rains,
Heavy the coins that go
Over the payment counter!

4.382. Edo kawazu issun mo ato e hikanu kana.

The Edo frog
Gives way
Not even an inch!

4.383. Yamayaki no akari ni kudaruru yobune kana.

Down the river

In the light

Of the blazing mountain grasses,

A boat at night.

4.384. Ume saku ya oya wa nakaredo ko wa sodatsu.

The plum tree blossoms.

Even without parents

A child grows up.

4.385. Umebachi no dai chochin ya kasumi kara⁸⁰.

The plum blossom crest

On the huge paper lantern

Emerges from the mists.

4.386. Kore hodo no botan to shikata suru ko kana.

"A peony as big as this!",

Says a child

With his hands.

4.387. Shonbori to susume ni sae mo mamako kana.

A sparrow

Alone and crestfallen,

Even among sparrows

Are there step-children?

4.388. Nomi no ato kazoenagara ni soeji kana.

Counting the flea bites

Mother

Suckles the babe.

4.389. Zabuzabu to shirokabe arau wakaba kana.

Dashing, dashing against it

As if to wash the whitened wall,

Fresh green leaves.

4.390. Ichinin to kakitomeraruru yo samu kana.

My name alone

Written in the inn register,

How cold the night.

4.391. Hashiragoto nado ni shite asobu yabu ka kana.^{81.}

Swarming, reforming,

Swarming again.

Thus play

The mosquitoes from pillar to pillar.

4.392. Mamakko ya hirune shigoto ni nomi hirou⁸²

The step-child

Labours during the noontime rest,

Picking fleas.

4.393. Kisoyama ni nagareirikeri ama no kawa.⁸³

Flowing into

The mountains of Kiso

The Milky Way.

4.394. Mandō mo hin itto mo tsuyu shigure.⁸⁴

The lanterns of the rich,

The single lantern of a poorman, too,

In the dewy drizzle.

4.395. Uragare ya shokuange dasenu shoseisatsu.^{85.}

Withered harvest.

"No alms given

Of cash or kind",

The little notice says.

4.396. Iru hodo wa te de kaite kuru ko no ha kana.

With my hands

I rake in just enough

For the fire.

Fallen leaves.

4.397. Yami no yo no hatsu yuki rashiya bon no kubo.

Outside, in the pitch black night

I feel in the hollow of the nape of my neck,

First winter snow

Is falling.

4.398. Sori ōte saka o noboru ya chiisai ko.

Sledge on his back

Climbing the hill

A little child.

4.399. Hiiki . . me ni mite sae samuki atama kana.⁸⁶

Seen . .

Even with a biased eye

My head looks cold!

4.400. Hae warae futatsu ni naru zo kesa kara wa.

Laughing, crawling,

Into your second year

From this morning,

4.401. Hinraku zo toshi ga kureyo to kuremai to.

Ah, the ease of poverty!

Whether the year draws in

Or not,

Is no concern to me!

4.402. Uramachi ya sakisutete aru kiku no hana.

In the backstreets of the town,

In full bloom

Yet discarded,

Crysanthemums!

(b). Waga Haru Shū.

This work is kubunshū, i.e. a collection of prose pieces interspersed with haiku verse. It was written in Bunka 8th. year (1811) when Issa was 48 years old. It contains 167 verses 119 of which are by Issa. Some of this work is in the linked verse form, made in the company of other poets among whom Natsume Seibi is a major contributor. Blocks of haiku verse are placed at the end of prose passages and in one section Issa has inserted some verses from the period Bunka 3rd.

year (1806)⁸⁷. In this way Issa uses previous verses in the composition of this new work and thus this work becomes the prototype for Issa's celebrated 'kubunshū' composition 'Ora ga Haru'.

'Waga Haru Shū' translates into English as, "The Collection, Springtime of My Life".

Selected Translation.

Foreword.

Many years ago there lived a man who owned a country villa at which there was a spring that gave forth water clear and pure. Fearing, lest it was too easy for others to come and draw the water, he built a wall round the spring and covered it twice over. The years passed by and in time the wall decayed and the water lost its purity. Thorns and bushes of all kinds grew in twisted profusion and covered the spring. It became the domain of leeches and mosquito larvae. Thus its very existence

unknown, it became buried in the wilderness.

For we who endeavour to tread the way of haiku poetry it is the same. In the beginning we seek to cleanse the tarnish from our minds and if we do not dip into our hearts to scoop the staleness out our poetry becomes so much rotten vulgar verse, finally unfit even for the dogs. Thus the poet, unaware of his own stagnation, despising the world and cursing other men, continues on his pathway and there is no way he can escape suffering in the hell of his own conceits and theories.

Fearful lest such should befall him he makes his way to the saint of Komoriyama⁸⁸ and wisely occupies himself practising his verses while night and day, others gather, each refining his poems and presenting them, thus making the place one where every poet's verses are judged by others. From the beginning of the year poets come and go but each is asked to determine in his heart that while he is there he will not use mere decorative and meaningless words to form his verses.

Bunka 7th. year. Dec. The Chief of Beggars from Shinano.

4.403. Waga haru mo jojo kichi zo ume no hana.

Plum blossoms,

My life, too,

Is on the up and up!

4.404. Kerorikuwan toshite kari to yanagi kana.

Standing

With complete indifference

A wild goose
And a willow tree.

--//--

Leap Year, Feb. 29th.^{88^a}

The rain at last had ceased and early in the morning, my cloth bag hanging from my neck, I hurried along the embankment of the Sumida River. The hazy first light of morning could be seen to the east but the little outcrops of trees were still in darkness.. Nevertheless, what was this? What was the shogunate up to? There, rocking gently on the river was the brightly coloured shogunal barge, the Tenchi-maru.

A new road had been made between the ricefields and over the ditches sheets of wood had been placed. Everyone seemed to be waiting for the shogun to come, indeed even the insentient shrubs and grasses, blown by the spring breeze seemed to be bowing in obeisance and praising his auspicious reign!

4.405. ⁸⁹Iwosaki ya mifune ogande kaeru kari.

With reverence
For the shogunal barge
The geese fly home
At Iwosaki.

⁹⁰
The bell at the Mokubo temple sounded the break of day and all was quiet. From among the blossoms came the early spring calls of the cuckoo. As I went upon my way I came across an old Buddhist priest with a face as wrinkled as a dried plum, sitting on a tree stump. The

ashes of his handwarmer were burning brightly as he sat there and he seemed to me to be a man who was no stranger to loneliness. He looked my way as if to say that he would give me a light for my pipe and when he said to himself, "Who indeed should I show such fine cherry blossoms to?", I felt that here was no ordinary man. While I was resting there with him there appeared a woman, her painted wooden sandals clattering on the road as she swayed and lurched along. With her unkempt hair a mess, as if she had just got up, and with a toothpick between her teeth, she appeared to me to be such a wanton as to take on ten men at once!

Then, from the bottom of the hill appeared five or six men each carrying buckets of 'night soil' swaying backwards and forwards from the ends of the carrying poles balanced upon their shoulders. Their noisy chatter was like the cawing of the local crows as they came upon their way.

A few minutes later they stopped in the shadow of some trees and as the woman passed by they sniggered such things as, "What a dreadful way to get up in the morning, old dear! My, its going to rain today!" The woman heard them instantly and in a flash retorted, in a most unladylike way, "Watch yer lip! Say that again and I'll wring yer necks and break the legs of every one of yer!"

Her words to me were like snow flakes fluttering along in the wind for they found no abiding place in my heart, but this incident, too, was a spring scene among the trees!

4.406. Shimajimo ni umarete sakura sakura kana.

Cherry blossoms

To those

To the lower classes born

Are cherry blossoms still!

--//--

About noon on the 16th.⁹¹ I found that the stem of my pipe was blocked up so I whittled a piece of bamboo to the size of a straw and pushed it into the pipe-stem but it became stuck and I couldn't get it out. The end of the bamboo slither protruded from the end of the pipe-stem just enough for me to catch it between my finger nails. Unable to pull it out any other way I bit the protruding end between two of my remaining back teeth and pulled. The slither remained in the pipe-stem but with a creaking sound out came a tooth! Ah, what a stupid thing to have done! It was a tooth I really depended on. If only I had used a pair of pinchers I would have been able to pull it out of the pipe-stem with ease but I used my teeth because it is difficult for me to ask help from others.

I have been lodging at this temple⁹² on and off for twenty years and the folks here are used to me but even so it is difficult to do as one likes and this is why this painful thing has happened to me. And how much moreso has it been my lot during the last forty years while I have been on my travels. I have slept like a wolf curled up, sleeping in the open fighting my fear and trembling lest

my soul depart me at such a time. I have lodged on ships in storms at sea, enduring the glooming prospect of my body sunken and resting on the seabed amidst the seaweed. At times upon meeting the springtime and the blossoms I have been enabled, for fleeting moments, to forget the sorrows of this life but for the most part it has been grief, grief like as at the passing of the dewy autumn.

Just as one rests while carrying a heavy burden, there is always pain to follow pleasure and as day follows day the remaining days of life are unceasingly made fewer. Thus I pondered as I looked upon my broken tooth.

Perhaps one day if I have a little house of my own even the size of two straw mats, and could give in kindness a bowl of rice to someone, this would for me be heaven, yes heaven itself!

4.407. Gari gari to take kajiri keri kirigirisu.

Crunch crunch,

Munching bamboo

A grasshopper.

--//--

With the mountains to the southeast and the open sea to the northwest there is at the village of Momokubi⁹³ in Kazusa province a piece of land ideal for the building of a national coastal defence post. However, in the way was a little house that protruded into the cordoned area like a bump. At this house was a woman who looked so old one wondered whether she would see tomorrow. She looked like the owner of the house as she sat alone steeping

hemp and making rope. Seeing her there and taking great pity upon her the shogunal official asked, "Do you have any children?". The old woman sobbing replied, "I had a son but years ago he left this his village⁹⁴ for other places and is now, I have heard, in the city of Edo at a place called Hôncho or something, where he is working as a hairdresser."

At this the official said, "If that's the case we must call him back here, we will give you a better piece of land and a fine house in exchange for this one. Not only so, but I will get your son a long term permit⁹⁵ to practise hairdressing here and give you, for the rest of your life, a stipend of rice enough for two, and thus we will take care of you. You will be able to stop making hemp rope, and in the long spring days you can enjoy the scattering blossoms and feel the impermanence of life while praying for future bliss in heaven. In the pleasant coolness of the autumn evenings you will be able to admire the moon as it hangs low in the sky. Morning and night you can, by your acts of piety, sow seeds of eternal enjoyment. How much happier your life will be! The fact that you have a house that is an obstacle to our work has become to you a source of heaven's blessing! Leave this place quickly and move to over yonder."

Anger seemed to well up within the woman at this talk and shaking her head, her white hair waving like candle-wick upon it, she said, "What treachery is this! This house has been, from generation to generation, handed

down to us from our ancestors. This house is of immense importance to me, even if you gave me gold pieces as innumerable as the stars in the sky they would appear to me as nothing more than a poor man's bowl of rice! This humble cottage is indeed to me a treasure beyond comparison, even if you took my life I would not move from here!".

Thus she retorted on the verge of tears as she rubbed her hands together imploringly and stamped her feet upon the ground.

Having been as kind as he possibly could the official replied, "Well old lady, don't you regret this afterwards now!", and carried on roping off the land around the house.

Who, as long as long as the sun and the moon doth shine, who, in any place the dew falls upon, who, among all that lives can defy the order of the shogunate? The stubborn are indeed but fools!

4.408. Tsuki sae mo soshirare tamou yūsuzumi.

Go on

If you please,

Curse the moon as well,

In the cool of the evening.

Even so who would not grieve to have the ripening green fields that they have tended, taken away?

4.409. Aoina ya nagitaosarete hana no saku.

The green ears of rice,

Mown down

While flowers bloom.

When the merchants of Zenkōji town in Shinshu province say, "Today they are catching fish off the shore of Imachō⁹⁶ in Echigo province", sure enough, in three days time there are so many passing through with their loads of fish that there is hardly room to move!

When they say, "There are no fish today", that's just what happens and in three days time there are none!

My friend Ryūsō⁹⁷ always says that the merchants know their business so well that their very spirits traverse to and fro along the fifty miles that separate Zenkōji from Imachō.

In like manner, although my old friend Ryūsa has departed from this present world, could it be that my spirit comes and goes between this world and that to call him from that other world? What an amazing thing that though I had not planned it, I find myself here in his hometown on the very day of the thirteenth anniversary of his death. I wring out the sleeves of my kimono, wet with heartfelt tears.

4.410. Nantoshite wasuremashō zo kare suzuki.

Indeed, how can I,
How can I ever forget?
Withered pampas grasses.

4.411. Tsuka no shimo kari mo mairite naki ni keri.

Frost on the gravestone.
To pay their respects
The wild geese also come
And cry.

--//--

Five worthless samurai lost their stipends and were reduced to poverty. They foolishly gambled away what little they had and having no one to turn to for help they took to moving from province to province and made their living, it seems, by threatening others.

On the 12th. of February, towards evening, they came to Hatoyama village⁹⁸ in the Katori district of Shimosa

province and insisted upon being given hospitality saying, "Let us lodge here for the night".

However, the chief elder of the village, a very brave and eloquent man, would not entertain such men at all and dismissed them with a look of disdain and a nod of the head as if he were brushing away mere flies.

At this, with voices loud and rough and rounded eyes aglaring, the village elder and the five samurai cursed and swore at each other. While this was going on the village elder gave a planned signal and a hundred villagers gathered noisily ringing bells and blowing on conch shells. Some carried staves and others wielded scythes.

The elder, raising his voice to a shout declared, "Yaa, yaa, we won't let these rogues make demands on us!" and the villagers surrounded the five samurai. The samurai, thinking this was the end for them each drew his sword and after fighting for a little while they sliced off the head of the elder and struck down four or five of the villagers who had closed in on them. The villagers, now very fearful, dispersed in all directions like leaves blown from a tree while the samurai, taking advantage

of the darkness, ran off.

Two or three days later one of the villagers found on the ground a piece of paper which turned out to be a shinto priest's permit of office. The villager made a public disclosure of his find. The one who had dropped this piece of paper was a follower of the shinto priest and shrine guardian Kida Daishin of Saguraryō Roppōno.⁹⁹

On the 15th, today, Daishin was in the village of Fugawa¹⁰⁰ where, accompanied by his wife, he was enjoying the yearend festivities, singing and dancing to the hand-drum to his heart's content when suddenly, as if water were poured into the ear of a sleeping man, the military officials burst in upon him tied him up and bundled him into a bamboo cage. His attendants, thinking the same would happen to them, with ashen faces stood up and started clambering out of the way. Daishin, however, was as calm as the gentle dew itself and with a high pitched voice recited a verse;

"The hawks which cut and dispersed

The mountain doves

Are now over yonder,

But all this great trouble

Befalls me, Kita Daishin."¹⁰¹

He was carried off to Edo Matsudaira the chief justice for Hyogo province. He went fearlessly and with no signs of distress at all and since then the villagers have told and retold how exceedingly courageous a man he was..

I also heard the news that in the village of Ōmigawa¹⁰²

someone was killed by a tinker and that a gambler had taken to highway robbery. In view of all these happenings in the vicinity I decided not to go on to Ōminami¹⁰³ and passed the year-end in the village of Fugawa.

4.412. Yuku toshi ya tanomu koyabu mo kare no hara.

The year draws in,

The little copse

I was depending on,

Had become a withered moor.

(c). Kubun. Commiseration Over a Shipwreck. (Date unknown but prior to Bunka 9th. year, 1812¹⁰⁴).

On the 24th. under the shadow of Mount Fuji, a cargo boat plying between Edo and Ōsaka went down. It sank very quickly and ended up on the bottom of the sea among the seaweed.

How sad the sailor's lot that they should think it would have been better to have gone down with the ship than to live and face their master. But as whitened ash can never become wood again so there is no way now at all that the cargo can be turned to golden coin. All they can do is weep and groan, casting their gaze this way and that, first looking up to heaven and then prostrating themselves upon the ground their tears falling upon the rocks until the very rocks themselves are dyed with them! They must however eventually resign themselves to the fact that all in this world is temporal and thus pick up the threads of life and with longing for their wives and children, return home, wring the saltwater from their clothes and there endeavour to keep the threads of their bitter lives from breaking.

Yesterday they rejoiced in the power of the stormy wind to speed them on their way, today they mourn the loss of all they owned. Life, what wearisome business the whole thing is!

4.413. Toshi toru mo wakare wakare ya shiranu tabi.

Growing old, too,

Is just one farewell after another

On a journey

To not knowing where..

28th.

105

106

Crossed from Momokubi to Uraga. Upon seeing pieces of driftwood etc. from the sunken vessel floating near the shore I, along with others, recited Buddhist prayers.

4.414. Shimo arashi taga tsumi tsukuru nagare hota.

And who's to blame

For all this floating firewood?

Cold and frosty storm.

Thus I present my thoughts on this event just as they have occurred to me. Please burn this after you have read it in memory of those who have died.

Fumaizenji Issa.¹⁰⁷

(d). Kubun. Elegy to Nakamura Keikoku¹⁰⁸. Oct. Bunka 10th year. 1813.

From his youth my friend Keikoku disliked the strictness of the Nakamura household and without any misgivings at all relinquished all his inheritance rights in favour of his younger brother and built himself a little cottage where he grew his own vegetables, drew his own water and passed his days and nights. Like the moon itself, water was his only mirror and there he tidied his dishevelled hair. With the breezes from the pine clad mountains which surrounded him he passed his days with an understanding of the true nature of life and things, and for him there was no greater pleasure than to live this way.

Whether our relationship was decided for us in a previous existence I do not know, but from our childhood our friendship was always something more than ordinary. Without fail, before setting out upon a journey and immediately upon return from one, I would call to see him and tell him all that had happened upon my travels¹⁰⁹. The time would pass so quickly that we would hardly notice it passing at all. With him I would find refreshment from the hardships of my journeys and when the time for blossom viewing came we would, without fail, each with staff in hand, go to view them together and of an evening we would together gaze wistfully at the autumn moon. At times we'd lie together sharing the same straw mat, while at other times sleep under the same mosquito net or warm our feet under the same quilt.

A day without meeting him was like a hundred and when together we would talk day and night yet never bore each other. We shared our joys and grieved together in our sorrows.

It was on the 7th. of October while I was on my travels as a poet in the countryside that he quietly and without pain, as a drop of dew that gently falls, .. breathed his last.

It was on a rainy night while on my travels that he passed away. That night the foreboding in my spirit was no untruthful dream and now in my loneliness, as one who is left behind, of a truth I felt like a little boat out upon the seas without sail and with rudder broken, while within my heart the waves of passing years roll on and fade away as if upon a beach. Life is indeed an irksome business.

4.415. Kono tayori kike tote aru yo hito shigure.

On the night they said,
 "Give ear to these tidings",
 A cold evening shower fell.

On the 27th. I visited his grave.

4.416. Yūgure ya tochi to katareba chiru ko no ha.

Eventide.
 As I talk unto the soil
 Under which he lies,
 There falls a leaf.

On my way home I called in at his cottage. The doors were shut tight and the cold wind whistled through the

holes torn in their paper covering, sounding to me
like a cuckoo calling from another world. It was
so very pitiful.

4.417. Kyō bakari betsu no samusa zo echigo yama.

On this day

The coldness

Indeed is different.

Mountains of Echigo.

(e). Kubun. A Fifty Year Old Bridegroom. April, Bunka
 110
 11th.year. 1814.

This spring at last, after fifty years without a day of ease, I have taken a wife and forgetting the fact that the years have rolled on and left me an old man, I like any other man in his desire, am like a butterfly alighting upon his first flower. I am, though with embarrassment, longing to find happiness and I find it amazing that at this age such longings still remain.

The whole thing to me is somehow fearful!

4.418. Hito no yo ni hana wa nashi to ya kanko dori.

Who said

That in this world of men

There were no flowers,

O, mountain cuckoo?

4.419. Waga io wa nani o mōsu mo yabu wakaba.

My dwelling,

Whatever is said,

There are fresh green leaves

On the trees around.

4.420. Mika tsuki ni atama utsu na yo hototogisu.

Come now cuckoo,

Don't go bumping your head

Upon the three day moon!

4.421. Hito rashiki kae mo kae kerī asagoromo.

Just like anyone else,

A fresh change of clothing,

Morning kimono.

"May everlasting blessings be upon you and your future be a happy one" they say, as neighbours receive the rice-wine we present to them.

4.422. Gojū muko atama o kakusu ōgi kana.

Hiding his head with his fan,

A new bridegroom,

Fifty years old.

Section 4. THE BUNKA PERIOD. Second Half. 1810 - 1817.

The Development of Issa's Distinctive Style.

Introduction.

In this period Issa reaches his peak in terms of the volume of poetry he produced and in terms of the maturity of his distinctive style. Within the Nanaban Nikki Issa's style reaches the high point of its development. Up until the time Issa wrote, or began to write, Nanaban Nikki we can trace the development of certain themes to various degrees of maturity but in this work all the distinctive themes and characteristics of his mature style find their fullest expression, even those which up until the previous period had developed but a little.

As Issa entered the 7th. year of the Bunka period (1810) a quite remarkable change is noticeable in his work. As if a dam had burst, both the number and variety of his verses increase remarkably. During the 9 years covered by the Nanaban Nikki Issa records over 7300 verses in this work alone. This is, on average, over 800 verses a year. While the various themes he develops come to maturity, his light-hearted wit and choice of everyday subjects and modes of expression pervade his poetry as a whole.

In the Nanaban Nikki we find all the components of Issa's mature distinctive style. Parody, imitation of and adaptations from the verses of others, senryū verse,

popular songs, conversational and slang expressions and provincial dialect, he uses them all with a defiance for traditional poetic values, a disregard for convention and with an audacity unknown among serious poets before his time. Even though at times his verses are hardly true haiku poetry one cannot but be amazed at the sheer energy he displayed and the ease with which he produced verse after verse in his distinctive unfettered, light-hearted, witty yet realistic style.

The powerful impression left with the reader of the Nanaban Nikki is the strong contrasts among the poems produced by Issa. His verses stand, at times, even in contradiction to one another in both content and tone. All the differing and contradictory elements of Issa's personality find expression forcefully in his poetry. We find strong expressions of anguish and bitterness along with heartfelt self-examination and reflection, obstinate self-centredness and sentimental innocence, unbridled hatred and scorn and boundless pity and sympathy, bitter denunciation and innocent humour, cynical self-denigration and light hearted optimism, audacious disregard for tradition and conventions and zeal for haiku poetry unmatched by any other poet, a sincere religious attitude and a sarcastic humour pointed towards religious objects. At times, he shows both respect and thankfulness for the social blessings brought about by temporal authority while other verses reveal a sense of resistance towards it.

All these contradictions were present within Issa him-

self and all found clear expression in his varied verses. The artistic profundity of Bashō's poetry and the elegance of Buson's verses are not frequently evident in Issa's work and much of it lacks true poetic depth.

Indeed, Issa's work in general is strongly imbued with the spirit of vulgarity which was part of the invigorating force behind much of the witty yet pointless versifying of the Edo populace in particular and Japan in general during this period.

Just as the ordinary man is at heart often full of contradictions, so Issa reveals himself with stark reality and in his poetry we see the contradictions, the weaknesses and the faults of the poet himself. He reveals to us through his work exactly the kind of man he was.

In Japan this kind of honest human realism is a mark of modern literature. It is very unusual indeed in the literature, particularly the poetry, of Japan before the Meiji period (i.e. before 1866). It is for this reason that it is hardly fair to evaluate the work of Issa with the same literary yardstick that is used to evaluate the work of Bashō and Buson.

Issa was born at a time when feudal social conditions and literary convention were heavily biased against the expression of individuality. It is against this background that Issa's poetry stands out in its uniqueness. It should be remembered, too, that Issa's individualistic realism was expressed in the tiny haiku poem rather than

than the novel or the longer verse. It was because of the power, honesty and realism with which Issa expressed this individualism within the tiny haiku verse that it can be questioned¹¹¹ whether he really deserves to be hailed with Bashō and Buson as representative of Edo haiku. By the traditional conventions of haiku verse a great many of his verses are on the boundary, or even outside the boundary of serious haiku¹¹² poetry. Such evaluation depends upon the literary definitions used to judge his work.

Be that as it may, Issa's enthusiasm for writing haiku, his rugged individualism and his emotional reaction to his circumstances caused him to break the bounds of convention and led him to pioneer new areas of expression in haiku poetry.

During the latter half of the Tokugawa period versifying was a popular pastime of all classes of people and consequently literary standards were lowered.¹¹³ Issa's style was influenced by this general trend, and this accounts for the low standard of much of his poetry, but it is also true that after his death there was no one for many years who anywhere approached the Issa style in its clearly expressed and individualistic realism. It is this uniqueness that we find in its maturity in the Nanaban Nikki.

(i). The Themes of Poverty and Loneliness.

These themes which came into prominence in Issa's work in the Kyōwa period, and consequently developed in the first half of the Bunka period, now find their fullest expression in the Nanaban Nikki. Examples of Issa's verses on the theme of poverty before he settled in Kashiwabara include verses ref. 4.45, 4.84, 4.92, 4.137 4.167 and the following verse;

Ienashi mo edo no ganjitsu shitarikeri.¹¹⁴

Upon the homeless, too,

It dawns,

New Year's Day

In Edo.

Though written upon hearing the news that many had lost their homes in one of the many and frequent Edo fires, the above verse is also a comment upon Issa's own poverty towards the end of his time as a resident in the great city.

Poem ref. 4.45 describes the well at his dwelling as being so small that he could take out and clean the pebbles within it with one hand. Verse 4.84 opens with a conventional seasonal phrase 'wild geese', which indicates the season of spring, but the concluding words are a realistic testimony to his own poverty. He imagines the geese to be crying in request for some grains of rice to eat, grains of rice that he does not have. Verse ref. 4.46 is in the same vein. Issa imagines the parting geese to be crying for a parting gift, the senbetsu that he himself had frequently hoped and canvassed for before

setting out on one of his frequent trips out of Edo. In the poem ref. 4.92 he celebrates the fact that he has been alive fifty years and has not yet worn the beggar's cape, but his verse is so worded that it gives a strong impression that he had only just escaped such ignominy! Verse ref. 4.137 is a powerful expression of poverty as he describes a home, most likely his own, in which there are not even a few green leaves to offer at the home altar for the souls of the dead who have returned for the Japanese 'Feast of All Souls'. Verse ref. 4.167 is a very realistic expression of poverty, with no tools to tend his little vegetable patch he just pokes at it here and there with a broken stick.

Examples of verses on the theme of loneliness before Issa returned to Kashiwabara to reside there permanently include poems ref. 4.44, 4.130, 4.173, 4.191, 4.205 and 4.275. Verse ref. 4.44 is a typical verse by Issa on this theme. The conventional opening phrase is followed by a personal expression of loneliness worded in an unusual way. The opening phrase describes the wild geese in the evening sky at springtime, but it is followed by a picture of Issa looking out at the geese and the smoke rising from the houses of the farmers as the evening meals are prepared. Issa looks out over his own knee-caps which indicates that he is alone and lonely. The composition of the verse, the opening phrase describing the fall of dusk followed by a string of three nouns, wild geese,

smoke and knee-caps, a mixture of conventional haiku vocabulary and 'knee-caps' adds power to the verse.

The use of strings of nouns like this is not unique to Issa but none used it with the same effect as he, for in his choice of words, he ~~mixes~~ conventional vocabulary with non-conventional words in such a way that a hint of cynical lighthearted humour is introduced without detracting from the seriousness and power of the poem.

Verse ref. 4.130 is an expression of loneliness that is relieved by the presence of the fireflies, while verse ref. 4.173 is an expression of loneliness that cannot be alleviated even by the cherry blossoms.

Verse ref. 4.191 is a powerful expression of loneliness in which we see Issa sprawled out on the floor enjoying the coolness of such an unceremonious position but also crying out against the loneliness which makes such a way of life possible. The power of this verse is emphasized by the use of the emphatic particle yo after the nouns for 'coolness' and 'loneliness'. It is given a typical Issa flavour by the use of the colloquial phrase dai no ji ni nete which translated literally means "asleep in the shape of the character for the word 'big'." (ie 大).

The poem ref. 4.275 is another unique expression of loneliness. Autumn, the season of sadness in Japan is drawing in, yet the sky is clear and blue, cloudless like a canvas that does not yet know the stroke of a brush upon it. Without a partner or companion to share his verse or thoughts Issa can only 'write' them with his finger-tip

in the sky. He thus creates a verse in which conventional haiku terminology 'autumn draws in' is prefixed by a description of the personal action of a lonely man, himself. The themes of poverty and loneliness are common to many haiku poets, but Issa's uniqueness lies in the way he relates these traditional poetic themes to everyday life in general and to his own experience in particular. By this time in his life his verses upon these themes are a set form of haiku unique to Issa in their realism, depth of feeling and form of expression.

Even after he began to lead a more settled and relatively prosperous life in Kashiwabara, Issa still composed verses in this vein. It had become part of his way of thinking, part of his view of life to see things through the eyes of one who had known great poverty and hardship, even though they were no longer his experience.

We have seen in the previous chapter that even before the second half of the Bunka period Issa was beginning to compose verses on the theme of poverty as a kind of 'motif'. The adjectival use of the noun binbō was seen as one example of this. Verses in which Issa continues to use this word can also be found in this period. Poems ref. 4.64 and the following two verses are examples of this;

115

Kusa no to ya binbō taru no shōbuzake.

A humble cottage,
In a poor little tub,
Iris wine.

116

Mi hitotsu wa binbō kuji zo aki no kure. ¹¹⁷

Still single

And with poverty my lot,

Autumn draws in.

In the same way, a closer look at some of Issa's verses will reveal the fact that although most of his verses on these themes are his personal response to his own circumstances, this is not always the case. For instance, the verse ref.

4.300 is provided with the caption 'Living in the back-streets of Edo' but is dated Bunka 12th year under the

month of June. ¹¹⁸ Issa was in Kashiwabara at this time.

The verse ref. 4.390 is also a composition either made upon reflection or based purely upon an imagined situation because it was made at a time when he was not traveling and yet is a travel verse. It is recorded in May of 1818 and given the caption 'Autumn'! ¹¹⁹

Such verses are further examples of how Issa did at times use the themes of poverty and loneliness as poetic 'motif' for his work.

After Issa had settled in Kashiwabara, however, there is a noticeable difference in some of his verses upon these themes, particularly those in which he describes his actual experience. In verse 4.307 he calls to the wild goose flying alone to come and use his house. The house is his own and his sympathy is for the lonely goose. The emphasis is more on the loneliness of the bird than upon his own. Verse ref. 4.286 is a picture of loneliness, but it also carries an air of contentment or even

contemplation as Issa₄ is depicted as smoking his pipe quietly in his own home. The verse ref 4.292 is also on the theme of loneliness but it does not have the force of earlier similar verses; for in this verse Issa is enjoying the evening coolness in his own home. The following verse contains an expression of poverty but one which is more than counterbalanced by an air of contentment and ease;

Usuberi ya hasu ni fukarete yuchatsuke.¹²⁰

Thin straw mat,

The lotus flowers

Blown by the breeze,

Tea and rice at eventide.

The verse ref. 4.401 contains the phrase 'the ease of poverty', but this is not the poverty of his previous near-beggarly life, rather it is the ease of one who does not have to worry about buying expensive gifts for rich friends at the end of the year. It is the relative poverty of the ordinary man compared to the rich man. The verse ref. 4.359 is in the same vein.

The above verses indicate that Issa's poetry upon these themes begin to lose their power as his circumstances change for the better. This is only to be expected in a poet whose work was an expression of his everyday experience. Between the time Issa left Edo to settle in Kashiwabara and the time he began to experience his deep grief at the loss of his children, Issa's work on the themes of poverty and loneliness was in danger of stagnation. Indeed, his work on the theme of poverty

was to develop no further. We find, however, that after the death of his first child in May of 1816 Issa produces a number of verses which contain a powerful air of lonely sadness as personal grief becomes his experience. These verses are not based directly upon any specific incident in his life but reveal a sadness and loneliness of spirit within the poet at this time which was to develop and deliver his work on this theme from stagnation.

Among such verses are poem ref. 4.338 where his care for the cricket is probably in response to his memory of his dead child who would have shared Issa's bed at times if he had lived, poem ref 4.340 which is a sad and lonely autumn verse in which dying is the major theme, poem 4.341, which is pervaded with the same air of struggle for life, while verses ref. 4.344 and 4.348 are pictures of sadness and loneliness from the world of nature. The sense of sadness which pervades these verses is not readily evident in the English translations but here we begin to see the effect of Issa's personal grief upon his poetry in the realm of loneliness, an effect which was to deliver his work in this theme, and others, from stagnation in his later life and save it from becoming less realistic than it had been in his Edo days.

(ii) Poems on 'Growing Old', the Theme of Aging.

During this period Issa's verses about his own physical appearance, age, and aging in general increase remarkably and provide us with some good examples of his cynicism,

wit and unique form of expression.

From very early on in his life Issa was conscious of his prematurely white hair. In his introduction to the Kansei Sannen Kikō he mentions that even though he is not yet thirty his hair is turning grey and his teeth are not

121
good. In the Hanami no Ki he refers to his 'white head' indicating that he was completely grey by the age of forty

122
six. In the previous chapter we have noted that he was conscious of his white hair by the age of forty one and that he was virtually toothless at the age of forty three.

Possibly his consciousness of looking old even when comparatively young was intensified by the fact that he was still unmarried, for as we enter the present period such verses increase considerably.

Among Issa's verses written during this period, before he returned to Kashiwabara, we find that he writes that his increasing age decreases his worth as the years pass by, see verse ref. 4.2, while poem ref. 4.7 contains the same sentiment, that his life is 'downhill' from now on. He was forty seven years old at this time.

In poem ref. 4.18 he compares himself to the maiden flower as it totters unsteadily as if to fall, while verses ref. 4.17 and 4.22 refer to the fact that age detracts from the enjoyment of life and one's usefulness. He describes his remaining front teeth as 'like poppies waving unsteadily' in a lighthearted cynical verse typical of his style, in that the poppy is a flower which is a symbol of the summer season in Japan and yet it is used to describe something as personal as his own loose front teeth!

Verse ref. 4.160 is in the same vein. It is typical of Issa to compose a New Year's verse with the traditional phrase hana no haru preceded by a description of his now hardened gums as 'like wooden pestles'. In verse ref.4.162 he commences his poem with the word kasumu, which is a conventional seasonal word for springtime, but Issa uses it to describe his own eyes, or eyesight, as now 'misty', i.e. his eyesight is failing. The verse 4.407 in the work Waga Haru Shū is preceded by an account of how Issa lost one of his remaining back teeth, and describes his envy at the sight of a grasshopper feeding on a bamboo plant. It is typical of Issa's verses in that it includes a repetitive onomatopoeic word describing a small creature, but is also subjective in that it is written in response to his personal circumstances. It stands by itself as a simple and unremarkable haiku verse, but in the context of its composition it is filled with a lighthearted wit and slightly cynical humour. The onomatopoeic phrase takes on a special flavour as Issa sits and envies the grasshopper's ability to munch. This verse is a good example of the need to understand Issa's everyday life in order truly to understand his poetry.

Even after his return to Kashiwabara on a permanent basis and during his life as a married man, we still find many verses related to his own appearance and aging in general. In 4.399 and 4.422 he still refers to his white headedness or even the beginning of baldness. Poem 4.369 describes his feeling of weakness as he tries to snap off a flower.

There is no doubt that after Issa returned to Kashiwabara and married, his health did begin to fail, but it is also true that Issa had been, and still was, a man of strong physical constitution and that his body was hardened by the physical discipline of constantly travelling on foot. The regularity and frequency of his marital relations with his young wife are further evidence that Issa was by no means an invalid during his early years in Kashiwabara after his return from life in Edo.

This being so, his verses on this theme are likely to be somewhat coloured by his cynicism and self denigration. He certainly seems to turn his cynical gaze upon all that is aged, while all that is youthfull is seen as good and beautiful. Examples of his cynical wit include verses ref. 4.43, where the aged plum tree is imagined to be straining to produce a few blossoms, 4.97, in which the old pine tree is described as 'pitiful or 'wretched', 4.175, where the nightingale, though very costly, is imagined as singing a lament over growing old, 4.306, where in a verse typical of Issa the poet's gaze is turned upon the very ordinary activity of a woman doing laundry on a fulling block, and yet he can distinguish the difference between an old woman and a young woman simply by the sound when she brings the washing down upon the block. This particular verse contains the onomatopoeic dota bata, conversational expressions dota bata and baba, and a keen observation of everyday life, all combined in a verse that is both cynically witty and slightly

pathetic, in a way that, in the context of his life and other verses on this subject, strongly suggest subjectivity. Other verses on this theme include those ref.4.326, 4.318 and 4.319, while verses on the beauty of youth include 4.185 and the verse;

123

Soyoge soyoge sara sara take no wakai uchi.

Sway, sway in the breeze,

Rustle rustle,

The bamboo

While it is young.

The verses on this theme quoted thus far are invariably humorous but Issa also composed some more serious verses in this theme including those ref. 4.138, 4.318 and the verse;

124

Hi no nagai hi no nagai tote namida kana.

Saying,

"The day is long,

The day is so long",

Through tears.

As Issa grew older and as we move into the present period we find, as in the previous section, the number of verses on the impermanence of life and about death itself increase considerably. In content, too, they show more depth and urgency. For example;

125

Mi no ue no kane to shiri tsutsu yūsuzumi.

In the knowledge

That it tolls over me,

I hear the temple bell

In the evening coolness.

Tada tanome hana wa hara hara ano tōri.

All we can do is trust,
For see the blossoms,
See how they flutter,
Flutter and fall.

Verse ref. 4.76 is also a serious poem on the thought of death.

In this period Issa uses the phrase *tsuyu no yo*, one of his most well used phrases, a synonym for the impermanence of life in this world, with increasing frequency. Poems ref. 4.36, 4.121, 4.122, 4.360 are all examples of this, verses ref. 4.202 and 4.396 contain similar sentiment, and verse 4.293 describes the moss which which will one day grow over Issa when he is dead.

Verses ref. 4.16, 4.25, 4.160, 4.203 and 4.204 too, are all to do with the idea of death approaching Issa in a personal way. There is a hint of cynicism in most of these verses, but basically they are serious poetry. Verse ref. 4.16 is a particularly powerful poem on this subject. It is a verse typical of Issa's poetry in that it contains a conversational repetitive phrase, itase itase used in the imperative, preceded by the everyday expression shinijitaku (get ready to die), and yet retains the conventional seasonal word for springtime, sakura, and the conventional concept that the falling blossom should remind us of the brevity of life.

We have traced the same process, loneliness - hardship - aging - death, in the previous section where we concluded

on a note of pessimism, but as we move into this period there is, in contrast, an air of optimism about Issa's view of the future.

Having lived for fifty years Issa began to express in his verses a sense of light hearted celebration of this fact. Poems ref. 4.13, 4.87 and 4.339 are examples of such verses. The sense of the mystery of life that they provoke conveys the thought that all is gain or profit from now on in terms of his own existence. This in turn enables him to see the future with an optimistic air. This is revealed in the verse ref. 4.147 which was written while he was still in Edo and in the midst of his struggle with Satsu over the inheritance, and the following verse which was written in the same year;

Kabe no ana ya waga hatsu sora mo utsukushiki. ¹²⁷

Through a hole in the wall

For me, too,

The New Year begins

With beautiful clear skies.

A distinct note of thankfulness is also evident in this period, thankfulness even for things previously despised. Poems ref. 4.187, 4.194, 4.274, 4.285, and 4.321 are just a few of the many such optimistic and positive verses in the Nanaban Nikki.

Furthermore, this sense of optimism is also a powerful element in his verses in praise of Japan, verses which he continued to compose in this period. For examples see poems ref. 4.96, 4.139, and 4.235.

This change in Issa's attitude towards life cannot be

explained without reference to the development of his religious consciousness and its effect upon his philosophy of life.

(iii) The Religious Factor in Issa's Work.

The fullest and clearest expressions of how the religious concepts of Amida Buddhism affected Issa's view of life and the world he lived in are found in the period that follows this one, but already in this the second half of the Bunka period we see that his work reveals a much clearer expression of his philosophy of life and the religious concepts that were aiding its development.

During the Kansei and Kyōwa periods there was very little religious expression and very little religious content either in the wording or the content of his poetry. In the previous period we see that the basic Buddhist concepts of the transience of life, the impermanence of all things and the inevitability of death find increasing expression in his work as a whole and that the specific vocabulary and concepts of Issa's own Buddhist sect, Jōdoshinshū, begin to be evident.

We have already seen in this period that the idea of approaching death is constantly on his mind and expressed vividly in his verses, and yet in contrast to the previous period there follows a sense of optimism about the future. There is no decrease in the depth or number of poems that reveal to us his sense of sinfulness and uselessness, indeed

they become more numerous and contain sentiments very close to penitence and remorse. For example, poems ref. 4.209, 4.212 and 4.347 are clear evidence that he continued to carry a sense of guilt and shame. However, there are in this period very few expressions of pessimism with regard to the future, and on the contrary, verse ref. 4.15 can be interpreted as looking forward to 'a home in heaven', especially in the light of the later verse;

128

Suzukaze no jōdo sunawachi waga ya kana

The Pure Land
Of cool breezes,
That is to say,
My home.

The reason for this change in attitude is that by this time Issa was beginning to truly exercise faith in the mercy of Amida Buddha and was, as it were, casting upon Him his own condition, his inability to do anything about it, his sense of worthlessness and his hopes and fears for the future.

In one piece of prose and the verse that follows it Issa clearly connects his own sense of worthlessness and shame with an expression of faith in the mercy of Amida Buddha:

129

4.51. Chiru ko no ha tōse nembutsu tōri keru.

The leaves fall,
With invocations to Amida Buddha,
I pass by.

'The leaves fall' is a seasonal phrase indicating early winter and at the same time contains the thought of

approaching death through age. The prose that precedes this verse describes a situation in which Issa is on a narrow country pathway. From the opposite direction comes a string of four or five working horses heavily laden with produce from the fields. They are unattended and the lead horse, upon seeing Issa on the path, leaves the pathway and leads the other horses through the mud at the side of the path in order to give clear passage to him. Issa is deeply moved by the action of the horse, and even moreso upon hearing that the horses had been working for hours already. Issa reflects that, though having the privilege of being born a man, his life has been worthless and of use to no one. He is full of shame as he compares himself with the hardworking horses and is embarrassed at the fact that such noble animals should leave the path for him.

It is at this juncture that Issa wrote verse ref. 4.51.

¹³⁰
It has been suggested that Issa's response to this situation was simply humorous, since he was in the garb of a travelling priest, but even if this were the case, the fact remains that the sequence of thought is there. A more deeply religious interpretation of this poem would seem to be in truer agreement with his poetry in general during this period.

For Issa, the result of his faith in Amida Buddha was that he was more able to accept things as they stood, to 'flow' with events and circumstances without trying to change them, to accept life as it came, believing all to be by Amida's mercy, and to trust the future to Him.

The clearest verbal expression of this faith to be found in Issa's work is the previously explained phrase anata makase. Issa uses this phrase with increasing frequency in this period and it reveals clearly how his philosophy of life had become very similar to that taught by Shinran the founder of the Jōdoshinshu Buddhist sect.

Whether it rains or shines, as far as Issa is concerned it is anata makase, ref. 4.79. Growing old and life after death is for him anata makase, and in the long nights when his conscience troubles him it is also anata makase, see poems ref.4.35, 4.136, 4.225, 4.209, 4.212.

It is basically because of this faith that Issa finds peace of heart in spite of his guilt feelings, a sense of self-acceptance in spite of his seemingly useless and unproductive life, a release from fear of the future, and a view of life and nature that enabled him to enjoy and appreciate them as they were in their truly natural state and for what they were in themselves 'just as they are'. Thus he was able to discern 'the spirit of life' in all that he saw in spite of what poetic, or any other convention, might otherwise teach.

Issa thus became his 'own man' and it is this sense of freedom that is largely responsible for the uniqueness of Issa's style in its mature form. His work became what can be called in Japanese ari no mama no tetsugaku, i.e. 'the philosophy of things-as-they-are'.

This is particularly evident in his view of nature. He sees the flowers and the animals as part of this fleeting

world, a concept common to all Japanese poets, see poems ref. 4.121, 4.122 and 4.225, but he also sees them in terms of the basic religious concept of Amida Buddhism, i.e. tariki, 'the strength of another'.

The bamboo shoots in verse ref. 4.295 and the herbs in his garden in poem ref. 4.825, are seen in this way. Verse ref. 4.309 is an even clearer example of this. Issa's chrysanthemums are allowed to grow just as they please and those that are trained to bend just as men want them to, are seen as somehow pitiful, see ref. 4.366. An even clearer expression of this concept comes from the next period;

Tsukuraruru kiku kara saki ni kare ni ker¹³¹

The chrysanthemums wither,

Beginning with those

Tended by man!

To understand these verses one should know that the art of growing chrysanthemums was and is very wide-spread in Japan and every neighbourhood has its yearly competition. There are basically two types of chrysanthemum, those that are supported by bamboo sticks and trained to grow straight and tall, and those which are trained on wire to spread out in various shapes with many flowers from one stem.¹³²

Issa valued the freedom of things which take their natural course and saw beauty in truly natural things, things as they are. This is the underlying concept of the following verse:

Magattara magatta nari ka yomogifu no yo o asa
no ha no iranu sewa kana.¹³³

Mugwort,

If you bend

Is it in your natural way?

In the overgrown world of the weeds

Unneccesary help

From the leaves of the hemp!

Sugu naru mo magaru mo onaji yo no naka zo

yomogi wa yomogi asa wa asa tsure.¹³⁴

Growing straight

Or growing bent

The world is just the same!

Let mugwort with the mugwort twine

And hemp plants with the hemp!

Furu ie no magari nari nimo toshi kurenu.¹³⁵

Upon the leaning crookedness

That years have brought

Upon the aged house,

The year draws in.

Kyō kyō to ukiyo no naka o furu ie no

magarinari naru toshi no kure kana.¹³⁶

A day at a time,

Says the old house.

While in this fleeting world

It leans and warps

As nature wills,

The year draws in.

The verse ref. 4.140 is another poem in the same vein.

The word magaru that Issa uses in these verses means

'natural' or 'to grow naturally' without any aid, or 'to

let things take their natural course' without any help or interference from others'.¹³⁷ Issa's concept of life for himself and natural things was to let them grow according to their natural bent without the effort of conforming to conventional standards or imposed conditions other than those inherent within the object itself. It was this basic religious concept, the beauty and meaningfulness of 'things as they are' that was one of the very basic forces within Issa which led him to see the value of things as they are in their real state. To him a wild chrysanthemum, though neither straight nor tall, was just as beautiful as the finest prize winning flower that man could train. To him the wild flower was an emblem of tariki, it was trusting in Amida Buddha alone for its beauty and existence, and Issa admired its naturalness. On the contrary, he viewed with cynicism all that was contrived or aided beauty.

This is the basic teaching of Shinran,¹³⁸ the founder of the Jōdoshinshū sect, and this view of life pervades Issa's concept of poetry and is one of the major unifying factors of his work. Many of the seeming contradictions in his poetry can be explained through an understanding of the underlying religious concepts of Amida Buddhism which shaped his philosophy of life. His work in its mature form is a poetic expression of the basic view of men and nature held by Shinran, but passed through the crucible of Issa's experience and influenced by his complex personality.

His disdain for poetic convention, his love and

sympathy for children and the small and weak, his ability to see the spirit of life in all natural things, his contempt for and sarcasm towards adult man and his society and values, his flippancy towards religious objects (see verses ref. 4.48, 4.56, and 4.266) while being basically a religious man, his appreciation and observation of reality and real objects, i.e. things as they are, and his growing optimism with regards to his future, are all much more clearly understandable in the light of an appreciation of his adherence to the values inherent in Amida Buddhism, upon which both his philosophy of life and poetry was clearly based by the end of the second half the Bunka period.

(iv.). Poems on Small and Weak Creatures.

This aspect of Issa's work had developed considerably by the end of the previous period and he continues to show a deep sense of empathy and a childlike affection for them in this period too. There are more verses in the Nanaban Nikki about insects and small creatures than about any other single subject. The major difference between Issa and other haiku poets, apart from the sheer number of poems he wrote about them, is the fact that he embraces their world as a whole. All the conventional and seasonal insects find mention in his verses, the summer firefly, cicada, mosquito and ant, the autumn dragonfly, cricket and grasshopper, the winter wild ducks, wrens and plovers, the spring frogs, butterflies, sparrows and

cuckoos. Alongside them we find also almost equal mention given to the less popular flies, lice and fleas, while Issa's view of the world of insects and small creatures embraces even the silver-fish moth, the mosquito larvae and the sea cucumber. See poems ref. 4.195, 4.190 and 4.266.

Animals and insects both lovely and unlovely are all viewed with the same innocent affection. The newborn sparrows, 4.66, the little sparrows in the field, 4.67, horses in the pasture, 4.95, frogs in the rice fields, 4.165, mosquito larvae, 4.190, silver-fish moths, 4.195, fleas in the long night, 4.205, the kitten playing with the leaves, 4.312, and the mosquitoes dispersing and regrouping, 4.391. The important point about all these verses is that the insect or small creature is the object of the verse. They are not used simply as indicators of the season, Issa's poems are acute observations of the animals and insects themselves.

Whenever Issa treats them in a humorous way it is without the hard cynicism he turns upon himself or the society of men; rather one feels that he enjoys their company and smiles upon them. See verses 4.146 and 4.255 and,

Neko no ko ya hakari ni kakari tsutsu zareru.¹³⁹

The kitten

While being weighed in the scales

Frisks and plays.

One senses continually the influence of Amida Buddhism

upon his view of all that is natural and unspoiled by man, his rules, conventions and society.

Issa's sympathy for and empathy with them in their struggles, though subjective to a degree because of his own life of hardship, are almost completely concerned with the feelings of the insects and animals themselves rather than with his own feelings imparted to them. He imagines the wild geese to be crying for grains of rice, 4.84, he wonders if the autumn cicada is crying because it is cold, 4.213, he feels for the fish in the bucket and the edible snails in the pail, playing, yet unaware that they are about to be cooked and eaten, 4.94, 4.301, he urges the escaped bird to fly off into the mist and his heart reaches out as a mother sparrow sees her young carried off, 4.14 and 4.354, and he calls to the single wild goose in the sky to come and share his home, ref. 4.307.

He continues to make them his conversational partners as he calls out words of encouragement and affection to them. The lice are urged to crawl after the departing springtime, ref. 4.246, the flies left in the house are encouraged to 'make love' and enjoy themselves, 4.290, and the skinniest of the frogs is urged on in the fight for a mate, ref. 4.39.

The last poem quoted here, ref. 4.39, is a strongly subjective verse, for Issa urges the frog on in the fight for a mate while using his own name in the poem as one whose chances were not good, but who had not yet 'given up'.

Another example of a strongly subjective verse is the poem ref. 4.211.

Akikaze ni aruite nigeru hotaru kana.¹⁴⁰

In the autumn wind

Walking, trying to get away,

A firefly.

Issa wrote ~~this fine poem~~ after he had suffered a severe attack of carbuncles which took him 75 days to overcome and during which time he thought he was about to die. Having recovered sufficiently to walk he made his way home, dependent upon his walking stick, to Kashiwabara.

The firefly is a summer insect, and because it is the autumn wind that blows, the firefly must be near the end of its life and therefore weak, so weak that it cannot fly against the wind. The poem is a precise and apt description of Issa's feelings, but at the same time is a verse which in its basic concept can stand alone and remains excellent haiku without an understanding of the circumstances which resulted in its composition.

Among Issa's verses about small animals and insects there are an increasing number in which he contrasts them with adult man. Issa increasingly uses one of his favourite phrases to compare men with the small and weak animals and insects, i.e. Hito no oni translated 'devilish men'. In verse ref. 4.23 Issa imagines the firefly to be hurrying as it passes by through a crowd of people, while in poem ref. 4.20 he puts the words 'men are devils indeed' into the mouth of a mother sparrow speaking to its young. In verse 4.34. he pities the injured bird who must now

depend upon man and in poem ref. 4.220 he imagines the blowfish to be angry at what is happening to it at the hands of men.

Clearly we see here in his verses, two of the contrasting elements in Issa's personality, his love for the small and weak creatures and his anger against man and his society. The unifying factor between these seemingly contrasting elements in his work is the influence of Amida Buddhism upon his view of nature and society. His childlike love for all that is natural, pure and unspoiled is reflected in his cynicism and anger towards man and his society. Issa sees man alone as having discarded the simplicity, and innocent values of the world of small creatures and insects, and as having filled his society with unnatural conceits and conventions, which result in pride, discrimination and oppression, things unknown in the world of nature as seen by Issa whose basic philosophy of nature and society were strongly influenced by the concepts taught by Shinran, the founder of Issa's faith, Amida Buddhism. Such was Issa's love for the small and weak in the world of nature, and his ability to include even the unlovely in his empathy with the insects and small animals, that his view of them has been described as a kind of animism,¹⁴¹ and that this animism¹⁴² is a direct result of the influence of Shinran's teaching.

(v). Issa's Poetry About Children.

Children were never a a major subject in serious Japanese poetry until Issa. Even in Issa's work it is not until this period that poems about children become numerous, but in the Nanaban Nikki we find that there are so many verses about children as to constitute a major development of his work.

It would be easy to assume that because Issa was a poet who found the inspiration for his work in his own everyday life that on becoming a husband and father his verses about children would naturally increase.

However, on the contrary, we find that his verses upon this theme have become very numerous by the end of the year 1813, i.e. before he was married. In actual fact Issa wrote comparatively few verses about his own children, but those he did write about them are among his most well known and most well loved verses, thus creating the impression that many of his verses are about his own children. We also find that many of his verses about children in his famous work 'Ora ga Haru' can be found recorded in the Nanaban Nikki without reference to his own family.

Issa's development of the theme of children is, therefore, not a result of his marriage and family life. Rather it should be seen as a further departure from poetic convention and an extension, (into the world of children), from the world of small and weak creatures. The same spirit of praise, love, sympathy and concern shown to

the small and weak in the world of nature is found in his work about children and their world.

He notices them at play among the willows, ref. 4.177, happily counting rice cakes, ref.4.229, asking for the moon, ref.4.207, crying at the red mist, ref.4.172, describing the size of a flower with their hands, ref. 4.386, and telling their age by holding up the fingers of one hand, ref. 4.302.

He describes the child at prayer to Amida Buddha, ref. 4. 59, impersonating a famous actor, ref. 4.189, mingling with the crows in the temple grounds, ref.4.24, and notices how a parent ridicules someone else's child for stumbling, while praising her own for doing it 'well' ref. 4.41 and 4.42.

We also find among his verses some that are based upon popular children's stories, for example, Momotaro ref.4.86 and 4.178 and the verse;

Babadono no shitagire susume sore kasumu.¹⁴³

Its tongue cut

The old lady's sparrow

Flies into the mist.

It is with sympathy that he looks upon the child without a doll out in the wintry weather, ref.4.134, and with delight as he sees the village street full of children playing as the snow thaws and as he notices the little child warmly bundled upon its mother's back at the village shrine-festival happily clapping its hands, ref. 4.232 and 4.151.

All the verses quoted thus far, with the exception of

ref.4.386 and 4.323 were written before Issa became a father himself. As with his verses about small animals and insects there is a definite subjective element in his verses about children, as he expresses his own sense of inferiority and weakness through them. This is particularly evident in his many verses about step-children and the children of the very poor.

The sense of awe upon the face of the beggar's child before the beautiful display of festival dolls, ref.4.12, the beggar under the bridge calling to his child to come and see the fireflies, ref.4.74, his imagining that the young crow eating the puckery persimmon is a 'step-child, ref. 4.346, the step-child practising his letters on the ground with a piece of broken stick, ref.4.350, and the step-child picking fleas during the noontime rest, ref. 4.392, are all subjective verses based upon his own experiences. His feeling of sympathy for the step-child in particular is extended to all in adverse circumstances who are unable to help themselves.

Even after his own children were born Issa continued to write many verses about children in general and step-children in particular, see verses ref. 4.398, 4.323 4.324, 4.325, 4.374, and 4.349 for examples.

A few verses in this period are obviously about his own children.

Verse ref. 4.336 was written for Sentaro in the hope that he would grow into a strong boy. ¹⁴⁴ Issa was 53 at the time it was written. Sentaro died within one month of his birth.

The following verse, too, was in all likelihood written in the hope that Sentaro would soon grow strong and develop into a strong little boy;

Tanomoshi ya tentsuruten no hatsu awase. ¹⁴⁵

How he grows!

It now has to be stretched and pulled

To cover him!

His first kimono.

The year after Sentaro died Issa's daughter Sato was born. As she entered her first full year Issa wrote the well known verse ref. 4.400 which describes her crawling around with a happy smile upon her face. Issa is obviously full of delight at the sight.

Among Issa's verses about children are some which he later used to describe his own children but which were in fact composed before they were born. An example of this is ref. 4.387 which was written a month before his daughter was born, yet which later appears in 'Ora ga Haru'¹⁴⁶ as referring to her. The verse ref. 4.360 is also used in 'Ora ga Haru' to describe Issa's feelings at her death, though it is slightly altered in its final form.

From this it is quite evident that Issa's poetry about children was clearly developed before he had children of his own. This area of his work, unique in the poetry of Japan, was therefore further evidence of his sense of freedom. He had moved yet further outside the boundaries of Japanese poetic convention and expanded his range of poetry to include the world of children.

He thus became the first poet in Japan to make children a serious and major aspect of his poetry.

(vi). Issa's Observation of the Life of Ordinary People and the Social Aspect of His Poetry.

During the first half of the Bunka period this aspect of Issa's poetry had already developed into a major distinctive characteristic of his work.

In the Nanaban Nikki Issa continues to reveal that he was a keen observer of the everyday life of his times.

In it he gives precise information of earthquakes, fires, deaths of beggars, robbery, fraud, rumours from the world of entertainment, murders, drunkenness, the amorous adventures of young men and the lives of prostitutes.¹⁴⁷

A curiosity for the dark side of life reveals itself in his work.

The prose passages quoted from his 'Waga Haru Shu' are examples of this curiosity and reportage. The passage dated Feb. 29th. depicts a typical town scene as the two men sit enjoying a smoke and a talk while farmers carry night soil to the fields in the early morning.

They decide to give some cheek to a dishevelled looking prostitute and get more than they bargained for!

The section describing the shogunal official trying to persuade the old lady to leave her old home and fields is also reportage upon a social problem in the time that
148

Issa lived. The same is true of the section about the five worthless samurai who try to coerce a village into giving them hospitality. Although humorous in content it is

also vivid social comment about the state of the samurai towards the end of the Edo period.

Among Issa's verses we find, too, those which depict the once proud and fierce samurai as now looking after their masters' pets, ref. 4.176 and keeping the flies off the master's horse, ref. 4.334. These are cynical comment upon the times in which Issa lived. The verse 4.358 is a comment upon the fact that the common man, while stepping outside to cool himself is ordered onto all fours as a mark of obeisance to the passing daimyo. It reflects the lack of respect for ruling personages that was common to his age.¹⁴⁹

It is about the weak and poor, however, that Issa's social comment is most vivid and powerful. The boy attendant standing in the cold autumn wind, the outcast village and the hard life of the poor farming villagers are typical subjects of his work in this vein, 4.111, 4.11. Particularly the life of the poor farming villagers finds mention often in his work.

Verses ref. 4.49 and 4.395 are similar in meaning. The former describes a sign on a single hut which states, "No soliciting for Contributions", while the latter describes a similar sign outside a whole village which has had a poor harvest. These signs were put up for the benefit of travelling priests and beggars and were indications of considerable poverty and hardship in the homes and villages.

Verse ref. 4.81 is comment upon the practice in snow-bound farming communities of sending the men off to find

work in the cities during the winter months to thus alleviate poverty in the homes of the village. Verse ref. 4.150 is similar in content. Although the village has vegetables and fowl aplenty it is still a miserable place, for winter has come and the men must leave to find work while the family stays behind, snowed up in their homes carefully consuming the stores of pickled vegetables and salted fish. Verses 4.353 and 4.381 describe the feelings of ordinary people who have to part with their hard earned coins.

Issa was the first major Japanese poet to turn his keen sense of observation, normally directed exclusively upon the world of nature, towards the life of the common man in general, the farmer in particular and society as a whole. He was the first Japanese poet to produce serious poetry of a social nature. This development was a further outworking of the realistic nature of his poetry.

While broadening the scope of his work in this area to include society as a whole, Issa still continued to write numerous verses about the everyday life of ordinary households and ordinary people. Among the verses in the Nanaban Nikki we find mentioned mud on the wooden sandals at the door, 4.1, idle talk in the city streets, 4.31, people quarrelling, 4.36, well cleaning, a job reserved for outcasts, 4.45, 46, 47, the handle of a hoe, 4.63, the working horse, 4.67, wooden pestle, 4.160 and 4.335, sack of charcoal, 4.217, gambling in the fields, 4.258, an old granny at the fulling block, 4.306, dog-droppings in a city backstreet, 4.310, the price of meals,

4.333. and 4.357, sardines for lunch in a busy farming village, 4.330 and dried salted fish wrapped in leaves, 4.375. These verses are just a few of the very many verses of a similar nature to be found in the Nanaban Nikki.

(vii). The Humorous Aspect of Issa's Poetry.

As we have already seen, there are very few humorous verses in either the Kansei period or the Kyōwa period and although they become more numerous in the first half of the Bunka period, it is in this the second half of the Bunka period that Issa comes into his own as a humorous poet.

It is indeed a remarkable thing that one who knew such hardship, disappointment and discrimination in his life should produce poetry characterised to a major extent by humour. However, Issa's humour can be seen as a way in which he comforts himself amidst these difficulties and also as an expression of dissatisfaction concerning them. By this time in Issa's life the humorous aspect of his style is not confined to any distinct type of poem, rather it pervades his whole work

The source of Issa's humour is not easy to define. It is the result of complex and interacting factors. As we have already seen in the previous chapter, Issa's humorous verses include those that are innocent and comical and there is no shortage of such verses in this period. The verses ref. 4.67, 4.181, 4.226 and 4.290 are examples. In these verses Issa describes or addresses the sparrow, the horse,

the cricket, the fly and the owl. This innocent humour continues to be directed exclusively to the world of nature and children.

Where Issa's wit is turned towards everyday life and is not coloured by his sarcasm, cynicism and self-denigration, it is little different from the popular senryū verse of his day. Examples of his poetry that are little different from senryū verse include poems ref. 4.61, 4.280, 4.335 and 4.279. These verses are witty, comical statements about everyday things, in which the seasonal element is incidental, if present at all. They are meant to amuse rather than to inspire. They provide evidence that Issa's poetry was strongly influenced by the spirit of the age in which he lived.

Those verses previously quoted, which ridicule those in authority, curse the world of men and reveal Issa's indignation against Edo in general, are all basically very close to senryū verse which was for the most part comic, sarcastic and often ribald.

But Issa's humorous style was not the product of the incidental influence of Edo wit and humour alone. There are numerous other factors involved, one of which was the type of haiku that Issa chose to study. Among the many pieces of work left by Issa is a reading list of haiku works and samples of poems, called Issa Tomegaki.¹⁵⁰ This list is thought to have been compiled in the second half of the Bunka period.¹⁵¹ The majority of entries are taken from works in the pre-Bashō Teimon and Danrin styles.¹⁵² In other selected collections made by Issa at this time, the

153

154

'Shidara' and the 'Zuisaihikki' are verses by Kikaku and other poets who represented the Danrin style. There can be no doubt that his studies in the poetry of those who composed in the Danrin and Teimon styles contributed to the formation of his mature distinctive style and further helped to give it that humorous and witty flavour which was their major characteristic.

Verses ref. 4.14, 4.142, 4.208, 4.268, 4.271 and 4.295 are typical examples of Issa's unfettered, lighthearted witty style.

Issa's humour is enhanced by the fact that he often wrote about common and vulgar subjects and used a common non-poetical vocabulary. Verses ref. 4.101 and 4.297 are humorous comments upon 'piddling' upon insects, 4.135 is a verse about passing wind, 4.147 about the backside of a horse, 4.264 about the backside of a serving man and 4.46 about the well cleaner wiping his face with his loincloth. These verses are technically haiku in that they include a seasonal word or expression, e.g. the frog, the firefly, the long night etc. but in spirit they are closer to senryū verse. The purist would not consider them haiku poetry at all.

Issa's use of very common words also tends to give a humorous tone to many of his verses. Issa used the words aho and baka meaning fool, heta meaning unskillful, hebo and untsuku meaning bungler or clumsy, with complete freedom. See verses ref. 4.230, 4.41, 4.152, 4.260 and 4.316 for just a few examples.

Issa frequently used these words about himself and

things personally related to him. When he does so they demonstrate the continuing sense of self-denigration, self-depreciation and inferiority that he felt towards himself. This self-scorn etc. was not evident in Issa's work until the beginning of the Bunka period, from which time on it develops into a major characteristic of his poetry. In the first half of the Bunka period there are many expressions of self-depreciation in relation to his poverty and lack of success as a poet. This development continues to become even more characteristic of his style in this period and we find that such expressions become more cynical.

Examples of this include verses ref. 4.163, where he compares his dirty finger nails with the simple plants of the field, 4.40, where he declares that his house is always full of mosquitoes, 4.167, which describes vividly the wretchedness of his vegetable patch, and 4.399 where he pokes fun at his own appearance.

Such verses in which he declares his personal worthlessness increase greatly in number during this period and extend to cynically humorous verses about all around him. In verse 4.118 the moss around his house does not know how to flower, in 4.282 the beautiful mountain mists do not come near his house, in 4.260 the insects in his house cannot chirp well, in 4.364 even the dew drops in his garden are not shaped properly, and in 4.316 his discarded New Year's decorations do not burn well (a sign of bad luck for the coming year) while all the others around his do! The bushes at his gate are useless and produce only mosquitoes 4.327, the snowman at his gate is the smallest

and most miserable of all, 4.367, and his willow tree does not droop properly! 4.378. By the time he wrote many of these verses he was no longer a poor man, but his experience in Edo had bred in him this cynical way of looking at his own personal world and he continued to carry with him this sense of inferiority until his death. It is this witty cynicism that helps to give Issa's humorous poetry its unique flavour, for combined with his masterful use of words, words of all kinds, it is one of the chief characteristics of what has seen become known as the 'Issa style'.

This view of himself extends from verses about simple objects around him and becomes the basic element in his view of his own life in particular, 4.72, and the whole of life in general, 4.72. At times he uses the same kind of expression to describe purely natural phenomena, ref.4.184 and 4.253. These haiku are not good poetry but they are very clear and powerful examples of Issa's very cynical view of life in general.

This same cynicism is also the major element in his verses which are parodies upon the poetry of others or which are his reaction against poetic convention in general. As we have already seen, one of the clearest examples of this is his view of snow, to Issa there is nothing poetic or beautiful about it at all and in verse ref.4.131 he tells it to go away to the capital where the 'idiots' are waiting for it to come! Here the word 'idiot' refers to those of high breeding, nobility and of conventional poetic sensibilities. While those in

the eastern parts of Japan are waiting for the plum blossoms to flower there is yet two or three feet of snow in Shinano, ref. 4.380.

Verses in which Issa expresses his reaction against conventional poetic values include those in which he feels that cherry blossom viewing is simply a nuisance which makes one cold, ref. 4.10 and 4.17 and to spend one's life doing such, is a waste of time, 4.71 and 4.72. He describes the crowds of people viewing the blossoms as a twisting, squirming mass of humanity, giving the impression that what they are doing has no meaningful reference to their real lives. He declares himself to be more interested in food than flowers, 4.240, and declares that it doesn't really matter to him whether the cherry blossoms bloom or not, 4.149. First winter showers only make him cold, 4.145, the cuckoo is just a noisy mountain bird (the 'righteousness' in this poem refers to poetic conventional correctness), and it is a waste of time to go through the day talking about the mists, while in the flowering plum tree someone has hung out a catskin to dry! Instead of a firefly shining in the wine cup there is a flea swimming, 4.77, and the fair maiden in the spring rains is simply yawning, 4.68, while the grounds of the temple are covered in vomit, whereas
155
in Kikaku's verse they were the scene of a poetry meeting, 4.268.

Here we see Issa's cynical nature turned towards the classic subjects of traditional Japanese poetry, the cherry blossom, the plum blossom, the snow, the mist, the fair maiden, the first winter showers and the wine cup.

Issa's view of these subjects is realistic from the point of view of one who has known poverty and from the point of view of one who has had to fight with nature, the snow, the cold and the rain, both as a poet and as one who had been brought up on a farm in the 'snow country' and who consequently appreciated the hardships of the farmer's lot. Having known hunger, he placed food before blossoms in his sense of priorities and he knew the world was not the ideal place that conventional poetry seemed to make it out to be. For him 'the firefly did not always shine in the wine cup', rather the lowly flea fell in the cup instead! Issa saw not only 'the poetry contest in the temple grounds' but also 'the vomit all over the place' that the participants left behind them. This is sarcastic realism, sometimes instructive in its balanced view, but more often than not bitter in its cynicism and denunciation of poetic convention and the lives of many of those who practised it. Though humorous because of the parody they contain, often one is left with a stronger impression of the poet's anger and indignation rather than of his wit.

Issa's humor was thus the result of the interaction of numerous factors, his experience of life, his personality, his farming background, his wide range of vocabulary, the literary climate in which he lived and his deliberate choice of the Teimon and Danrin styles as study material, together with his reaction against convention.

The result is a unique style of haiku poetry which, while humorous, is not merely comic and while cynical, not

flippant, since it is the product of a life of hardship.

(viii). The Composition of Issa's Verses. Word Usage and Poetic Devices.

One of the fundamental reasons why Issa's poetry became so popular with the ordinary person is undoubtedly his clever use of words of all kinds and his unique method of expression.¹⁵⁶ This aspect of his work had already developed sufficiently in the first half of the Bunka period for it to be recognised as a major characteristic of his work as a haiku poet, but it reaches its highest point of development in this the second half of the Bunka period. Because of his clever use of words and unique turn of phrase many of his verses in this period are masterpieces of light-hearted wit.

The use of repetitive syllables, alliteration and rhythmic words all increase the light-hearted flavour of his poetry, but it is the colloquial, conversational and common expressions which he uses with such freedom and frequency that gives his verses their sense of witty originality and cleverness.

The Japanese language contains a great number of onomatopoeic words and phrases, and it was not uncommon to find them used in haiku occasionally. However, no poet ever mastered them and used them with the skill or freedom that Issa did in this period. Examples of his usage of them in the Nanaban Nikki include;

kurikurishitaru to describe the moon on a clear night after snow had made the countryside a blanket of white. The phrase is translated 'so round and clear' ref. 4.4.

The word jaja used to describe the 'frisky' horse in the poem ref. 4.88 and the phrase kirikirishantoshite translated 'with sharp and dignified beauty' in poem ref. 4.143 are further examples. It should be noticed however that to accommodate the phrase in the last example here Issa has broken the 5,7,5, syllable haiku metre. This kind of verse was known as hachō which can be literally translated as 'broken metre'. Another example of a 'hachō' verse is 4.179.

For one with such a sense of rebellion against convention it would have been easy for him to have created many such verses. The surprising fact is, however, that among his 20,000 extant verses only very few indeed belong to this class of verse. Apart from the rule of metre Issa also kept strictly to the other basic rule of haiku, i.e. that each verse contain an indicative seasonal word which enabled the verse to be classified under one of the four seasons. This is one of the basic differences between haiku and senryū verse. There are, however, only about 100 verses in Issa's poetry which do not obey this requirement. Eighty of them were composed in the latter half of the Bunka period,¹⁵⁷ a further evidence of the growing sense of freedom Issa felt as a poet at this time.

Among these miscellaneous verses are those ref. 4.96, 4.97 and 4.99.

Further examples of common onomatopoeic words used by Issa are :-

hochi hochi to to describe 'snow in quiet abundance' ref. 4.155.

fuwari fuwari to describe large flakes of snow falling

softly down, ref.4.223.

nohohon to describe the hooting of an owl, ref. 4.226.

ijimuji yū to describe the clucking of plovers, ref. 4.229.

rintoshite translated as 'clearly magnificent' to describe a huge kite in the evening sky, ref. 4.244, and

ukkarihyontoshita to describe a blank and startled face lit up by a flash of lightning..

It is Issa's masterful use of such common and highly descriptive words and phrases within the tiny haiku form which enlivens his verses, and together with his very keen sense of observation, combine to make these verses unique and thus help to create the 'Issa style'.

In this period Issa also increases his use of dialect words. Examples of this are:-

chinpukan meaning 'unintelligible', 4.106.

yatsura, a slang word meaning 'fellows' ref. 4.208.

toppazure meaning 'to stick out on the edge of' i.e. the edge of the horizon etc. ref.4.219.

unputenpu for 'heaven decides', ref. 4.295.

nonosama a children's word for 'moon', ref.4.317 and

untsuku a little used word for 'fool' or 'stupid oaf' ref. 4.41.

Issa also continued occasionally to make words which seem to be his own creations, e.g.

bushōgami for 'idle gods' in poem ref. 4.70 and

hashiragoto for 'swarming, reforming' in verse ref. 4.391.

As a new development in his use of words in this period we find that Issa begins to use even purely

conversational phrases with the same freedom as he used colloquial and dialect words. The following are examples of commonly used everyday conversational phrases in his verses:-

are misai translated 'just look at that' in poem ref. 4.85.

dete ojiyaru a conversational expression consisting of the two verbs deru and ojiru which mean 'to come out' and 'in answer to our request or wish' or 'in conformance with', ref.4.105.

iyajagena translated 'reluctant to', ref.4.233.

raku danbei a conversational expression from the Kantō region. danbei in standard Japanese means 'darō', a weak interrogative form.

osewa ni narimasuru meaning 'to be looked after by' in verse ref. 4.303.

Another new development in this period is his increasing use of proverbial sayings and commonly used idioms in his verses. Examples of this include:-

ikigake no datchin translated 'a parting gift' ref.4.91.

ushi ni hikarete Zenkōji translated 'drawn by an ox to Zenkō temple', ref. 4.69.

ato wa no to nare yama to nare . This is a proverbial saying. The equivalent in English is 'And after us the deluge'. (Because the departure of the wild geese heralds the coming of spring in Japan I have translated the words literally).

hana yori dango is a commonly used proverbial saying the equivalent in English being 'Bread is better than the

song of a bird'. See verse ref. 4.240.

oya wa nakeredo ko wa sodatsu translated 'Even without parents a child will grow up'. A commonly used proverb which means 'Just as a child will grow up even without parents we do not need to worry too much about the future'. See. verse ref. 4.384.

For a serious poet to use such conversational, common and proverbial phrases in his work with such freedom and frequency meant stepping outside the bounds of poetic convention as it governed the traditional haiku verse of Issa's day. Because of the great frequency with which Issa used this variety of common vocabulary it can only be because of deliberate choice on his part. Verses in which he uses the vocabulary of the common and ordinary man are the result of long years of living among the poor and ordinary people of his day and of his great interest in the speech of the common man. Through this choice and this experience Issa became the first true 'people's poet' that Japan produced.

Among the poetic devices that Issa used to make his poetry even more distinctive in flavour are his continued and increasing use of the common personal pronouns ore, ora, ware and waga. See verses 4.26, 4.40, 4.58, 4.159, 4.237, 4.260, 4.309, 4.363 and 4.364. The use of these personal pronouns increases the everyday, common flavour of his work and makes it strongly subjective.

Another device which Issa used to give a strong egoistic flavour to his work was his frequent use of the particles zo and zo yo which are used to emphasize one's own

views and opinions. See verses ref. 4.3., 4.77, 4.35, 4.73, 4.103, 4.209, 4.327 and 4.401 for examples.

Another device that Issa had begun to use with increasing effect in the first half of the Bunka period and which he used with even more frequency and effectiveness in the Nanaban Nikki was that of personification. In addition to the personification of animals such as the horse in verse ref. 4.95, and the wild geese, in ref. 4.141, he also personifies the mosquitoes in verse 4.391, the cactus plant in verse 4.308 and the melon in verse ref. 4.196. The evening cherry blossoms are 'startled' into opening wider by the sound of human voices, ref.4.239, the scarecrow is seen as 'looking after' the farmers' lunches in verse ref.4.343, and the charcoal crackling as it blazed in the early morning was seen by Issa to be 'in good spirits'. To personify animals and even inanimate objects is a basic element in the children's story and in the world of the child in general and it is probable that Issa's tendency to personify comes from that part of his personality that loved the pure and unspoiled. It may also be partly a result of his religious nature, i.e. to see the 'spirit of life' in all things, and partly the consequence of his great loneliness. Whatever the case, by transferring his feelings to both animate and inanimate objects through the poetic device of personification Issa added a new dimension to the humorous nature of his poetry and added to its uniqueness.

One further special characteristic of Issa's work which becomes clearly evident during this period is the

skillful way he juxtaposes things large and small, near and far, within the tiny haiku verse.

In verse ref. 4.100 a tiny frog is compared with the towering Mount Fuji. The juxtaposition is made in such a way that the frog is made to seem large and the mountain small and in the distance. Another example of the same technique is the verse ref. 4.110. In this verse Mount Fuji is depicted as protruding just above the edge of the broad expanse of a field of yellow-flowering rape-blossom. The poetic picture created by these verses is so similar to the art work of Hokusai that it has been suggested¹⁵⁸ that Issa was influenced by Hokusai's work.

Hokusai was born in 1760 and died in 1849, whereas Issa was born in 1763 and died in 1827. They both spent a great part of their lives in Edo. Neither of them were famous in their day but both have been recognised as pioneers and representatives of their fields of art since then. They both knew discrimination, poverty and rejection during their lives in Edo.

Among Hokusai's most highly appraised works are his paintings of Mount Fuji, many of which are pictures of the famous mountain seen in the far distance in contrast with something close at hand, a field, a mountain pass, a wave of the sea, or even through a fisherman's net or a spider's web. Through this method of contrasting close-by objects with Mount Fuji in the distance Hokusai produced paintings of the famous mountain in a completely new genre. It is thought that Issa was influenced by Hokusai and used the same device in his poetry.

Verses ref. 4.186, 4.197 and 4.317 are further examples of Issa's use of this poetic device.

By this period Issa was writing haiku verses constantly. Freeing himself from all but the very basic haiku conventions he absorbed all the language around him into his work. In this way his distinctive style was formed and matured, but the result of his freedom was not all good. Used skillfully the many syllabled onomatopoeic words added humour and freshness to his work but also within the many hundreds of verses he produced there are many which degenerate into mere 'word-plays' which have no poetic value, for example verses ref. 4.89, 4.209 and 4.284. There is no poetic tension in these verses and none of the sense of enlightenment or inspiration which a true haiku verse should contain. Issa's unconventional word-usage was not all successful by any means, many of his verses are mediocre to say the least, but those which are successful are truly unique in the development and history of the haiku verse.

(ix). Issa and Conventional Poetry During this Period.

Issa's attitude towards the classical poetry of Japan is well illustrated by verses ref. 4.131, 4.380, 4.55 and 4.240. Issa remained a student of all kinds of poetry until his death but by this period whenever he uses words or phrases from Japan's classical poetry it is in order to make parodies upon them.

In the Nanaban Nikki can be found verses which are parodies on poems from the Kokinshū, Shinkokinshū and

Even though Issa had by this period ceased to use the legacy of Japan's classical poetry as a serious component of his own work, he never ceased to acknowledge his debt to the founder of what had become conventional haiku in his time, the great master Bashō. In verse ref. 4.188 he makes humorous reference to this fact.

Even after Issa returned to settle in Kashiwabara he continued to send lists of his verses to Seibi in Edo for his criticism and evaluation. Issa continued this practice until Seibi's death in 1816. The reason Issa did this is given in his own hand, for Issa wrote that his one worry about returning permanently to Kashiwabara was that he would be cut off from influence and trends of the Edo haiku scene.¹⁶⁰ This is clear evidence that while Issa pioneered much new ground and introduced many unconventional innovations into his work as he developed his own distinctive style, he remained a serious poet and continued to maintain his relationship with the mainstream of Edo haiku of which Seibi was a leading representative.

Within the Nanaban Nikki there are many fine verses in the Tenmei style. Among them are verses ref. 4.138, 4.383 and 4.393 in which Issa describes the mists from the nearby mountain creeping into his room, the boat coming down the river at night in the light of the blazing mountain and the Milky Way flowing into the mountain top. These verses are pastoral, descriptive and impressionistic, the three basic characteristics of the Tenmei style of

traditional haiku poetry. These kind of verses are the fruit of between twenty and thirty years of practice and study in this style.

Issa was a true master of purely descriptive haiku verse. Though not in the Tenmei style, the following verses are good, well balanced and serious haiku. They are lightly impressionistic and finely descriptive poetry but are neither pastoral or beautiful. The bird on the handle of the hoe, ref. 4.63, the offertory-box on the edge of the thicket, ref. 4.238, the store-house now visible through the leafless tree, ref. 4.218, the rat drinking from the Edo river, ref. 4.170, the towering clouds seen over the end of his own feet, ref. 4.197 and the enormous lantern emerging from out of the mist, ref. 4.385 are but a few examples of this kind of verse to be found in the Nanaban Nikki. They have the mark of Issa upon them in that rather than the idealism of the Tenmei style verse it is realism that pervades them.

A further example is the verse;

161

Yuki chiru ya kino wa mienu shakuya fuda.
 Snow flutters down,
 Until yesterday
 It was not there
 A 'House for Rent' notice!

Though written while in Kashiwabara Issa is here recalling his days in Edo. Walking in the snow through the streets Issa notices a new notice telling of a house for rent that was not there the day before. The verse is indicative of the constant change that took place in the great city and of the fact that Issa's eyes were well used to noticing such things because of the many times that he himself was searching for somewhere to live.

NOTES ON CHAPTER TWO. Section 4.

1. The capital of Ishikawa province.
2. Comp. Works vol.3 p.5.
3. In Edo times age was counted from the first of January each year. The implication of the verse is that as age increases worth decreases.
4. Servants and apprentices were given two days holiday a year known as yabuiri . These were the only times available for them to visit their family graves. The verse depicts the loneliness of the poor apprentices.
5. The word 'eta', translated 'outcast', is now a banned word in Japan. It has a very strong derogatory meaning and would cause irreversible offence if used today. The modern word used to describe Japanese from outcast districts is 'burakumin'.
6. The word 'hihina' is no longer used. It might well be that Issa made up this word in order to maintain the 5-7-5 pattern of verse. The usual word is simply hina .
7. The word ominaeshi consists of the Chinese characters for 'harlot' and flower'. The ominaeshi is classified as 'patrinia scabiosaefolia' and is a member of the 'Valerianadea' group. It is a tall wild flower.
9. On his way from Edo to Kashiwabara the sight of mount Chichibu fills his heart with all that awaits him in his home town. Chichibu mountain is on the borders of Gunma prefecture.
10. The Kasai plain is a flat fertile area in the Shimosa-Kazusa district around which Issa was constantly travelling.
12. The Kosuge estate was a private hunting estate for the use of the shogun. Kosuge is in the Katsushika district. The implication of the poem is that because the gates are closed and the hunters have departed the water fowl can cry out without fear.

13. The word matsu is possibly used here with a double meaning. Phonetically it could mean either 'pine-tree' or 'wait for'. The character used in the poem is the one for the former.
14. Sado is a large island off the coast of Niigata prefecture on the western seaboard of Japan. It was the site of a shogunal gold mine.
15. Asama mountain is an active volcano near the famous town of Karuizawa in Nagano prefecture.
16. The background for this poem is most likely a frog fight. During the mating season male frogs were made to fight over a female frog. Bets were placed and such frog fights became social events.
17. The well cleaners dressed only in loin cloths use them for wiping the sweat from their bodies when they come up from the well. Well digging and the cleaning of deep wells was traditionally an occupation of the outcast, a group of coarse and peculiar speech.
18. The katashiro is a piece of ceremonial paper cut in the shape of a human figure somewhat like a paper doll. At certain festivals the sins and impurities of the participant are transferred to the katashiro which is then placed in the river to float away. On Issa's katashiro he has placed body lice!
19. Kange hatto was a sign put up, at times by whole villages, when harvests were bad. They were put up to inform the temples and travelling priests that no contributions would be given due to the dire poverty of the village.
20. This whole poem alludes to a verse in the 'Shinkokinshū'. Comp.Works vol.3 p.95.
21. Moriya, a small town in Ibaragi prefecture about 20 miles from Tōkyō.
22. Hōrai is the name of a legendary isle of great beauty and much treasure thought to have been like a mountain rising up from the seas east of Japan.

23. New Year traditionally finished on the 15th. of the first month. The strolling players are five days late.
24. The word 'shishi' is the Chinese word for 'lion' and in this verse is used as a shortened version of the word shishimai or 'lion dance'. The shishi mai is a New Year dance performed by two men inside the ceremonial masked costume of the lion. It is still performed outside the homes of those willing to pay a small fee.
25. Legend has it that a faithless old lady was doing her washing when part of it blew onto the horns of an ox. She chased the ox until, before she knew where she was, it had led her to the Zenkō temple. The phrase ushi ni hikarete Zenkōji has since become proverbial.
26. -Inferring that the cicada is the re-incarnation of someone who has already died.
27. At the time when the wild ducks migrate men leave the country villages to find work in the cities.
28. Ōsamu kosamu are the opening lines of a children's song.
29. Age was counted from the 1st. of Jan. each year.
30. Issa implies that during the fifty years of his life he had only just escaped becoming a beggar.
31. This verse was composed in praise of Kakyō, a woman greatly respected and admired by Issa. She had died two years previously. She was a poetess and she and her family were patrons of Issa's.
32. Issa's feelings at the memory of the death of Kakyō are expressed in this verse.
33. This is a summer verse. In winter time ice was stored in mountain caves and used in summer when it became a precious commodity.
Issa is comparing the ice with the lice, implying that such a valuable commodity and a louse have no place in the same hand.

34. Musashino is a large wide plain west of Edo.
35. This verse was written shortly after Kisagata, a place of great scenic beauty, had been damaged by an earthquake.
36. This verse refers to the 'Ura Obon' festival which takes place in the middle of July. During the time of this festival the souls of the dead are thought to return to the homes in which they lived while here on earth.
37. Amidst the festivities the dancers jokingly pay tribute to the farm horse and recognise thereby that it has laboured hard and long.
38. A November verse. The snow has begun to fall and settle, so even in relative plenty the village to Issa is a desolate and miserable place.
39. The smoke from the constantly burning candles in a Buddhist temple produces a fine soot that first rises and then descends upon everything the temple contains. Normally inaccessible places are cleaned annually on a set day. This cleaning ritual is known as susubarai.
40. He has no teeth left and his gums are as hard as wood.
41. Issa is using part of a phrase which is used at the setsubun festival. This festival marks the beginning of spring. Beans are scattered outside the house accompanied by the repetition of the phrase 'Oni wa soto, fuku wa uchi', 'Out with the devil, in with happiness'.
42. Sumidagawa is one of the major rivers that flow into Tōkyō bay.
43. Issa is commenting on the fact that the once proud and fierce fighting man is now given the job of looking after his master's caged bird.
44. It is the children who are pretending to be 'flying squirrels' and frightening each other by jumping out suddenly from under the willow tree.

45. Momotarō is the main character in the famous childrens' fairy story by the same name.
46. Area of the east section of Edo in which Issa lived at one time.
46. This verse is based upon a verse by Bashō.
'Nodokasa ya iwa ni shimi-iru semi no koe'.
47. Danjurō Ishikawa was a popular actor during this period.
48. The prostrate body with arms and legs outstretched resembles the Chinese character for 'big' i.e. dai .
49. Issa is expressing contempt for the insignificance and loneliness of his birthplace.
50. Composed upon hearing of the death of Matsui, a friend and patron of Issa. The sentiment of the verse is that what Issa feared would one day happen has now taken place, his friend has died.
51. Written on a sickbed.
52. Written on a sickbed while covered with boils and carbuncles.
53. Written at a place called Obuse where chestnuts were grown in Edo for the shogun. Commoners were not allowed to pick them up.
54. Echigo is now part of Niigata prefecture, which is north east of Kashiwabara.
55. The cry of the crow resembles a word for 'fool' or 'stupid' in Japanese which is ahō . Issa is making a play on this word.
56. Hana yori dango is a popular proverbial saying.
It means 'I would rather have something to eat than look at blossoms'.
57. The courtiers have left the city to enjoy the springtime in the countryside.
58. The serving man, too, is lifting his kimono to relieve himself in the field. Issa is addressing the man's backside!
59. Rōhachi is the name given for the day which commemorates Buddha's moment of enlightenment.

- It falls on the 8th. of December. The priest in this verse had fasted until this day.
60. Akashi is a town on Japan's eastern seaboard just west of Kōbe.
 61. Moonviewing at the temple was accompanied by the drinking of rice-wine which resulted in drunkenness. Issa's verse is a parody on one by Kikaku.
 62. Koume is a district of Edo Mukaijima.
 63. Issa uses the word daiko whereas the usual pronunciation would be daikon.
 64. The caption to this verse reads "Spoken by a dove."
 65. Aka meshi (red rice) is probably unpolished rice. The common people usually ate this rice of 'poorer' quality. The other possibility is that Issa is referring to sekihan i.e. polished rice boiled with red sweet beans which was eaten at times of celebration. The meaning of the verse is unclear.
 66. The plant Issa is referring to is probably sagebrush, a herb which was often mixed with pounded rice to add flavour and fragrance. Issa is most likely looking at his own vegetable patch.
 67. The washed cat is probably a cat's skin. Catskins were used to make the drum of the shamisen a traditional three-stringed musical instrument.
 68. Some bamboo shoots will be found and eaten and others will grow into bamboo dependent upon where they sprout up.
 69. Written while living in the backstreets of Edo.
 70. Kiku was the name of Issa's first wife.
 71. Issa is referring to the courtier's cap worn by the man dressed up as a monkey at the New Year Festival of sarumawashi.
 72. The New Year pine decorations were burnt at the temple after the New Year had begun. If they burned well it meant good luck in the coming year.

73. See note 16. The verse has been repeated in error.
74. On normal days fish was too much of a luxury for most farming families. At rice planting time however it was a special treat, eaten to give energy.
75. This verse was recited over his baby son Sentarō.
76. When the old calendar, koyomi, was used it happened that in certain years the first day of spring risshun came before the New Year began (at the end of January). For Issa instead of being a welcome event it was a nuisance.
77. On going out into the street he meets the entourage of a passing daimyō, at which he, like all other commoners, is ordered to get down on hands and knees as a mark of respect and subservience.
78. Written at the grave of a friend.
79. In Shinshū there is a mountain known as Ubasuteyama. 'ubasute' translates literally as 'throw grandmother away'. In ages past it seems that old ladies were brought here and left to die in times of famine and hardship. Issa is drawing the attention of those who did such things to the dew on the grasses, implying that they, too, eventually pass away.
80. The plum blossom crest was the emblem of the daimyō of Kaga province (now Ishikawa prefecture). On his way from Edo for sankin kōtai he would need to pass through Kashiwabara. The huge lantern would be held at the head of the entourage.
81. The word hashira in this verse can be translated in two ways, the pillar of a house or a swarming cloud of mosquitoes. The mosquitoes may have been swarming around the actual pillars of a house under construction or merely forming and reforming in swarms. Both meanings are included in the translation given.
82. The step-child cannot sleep at noon because the fleas irritate him and keep him awake. Normally the mother would pick the fleas from the child as she lulled him to sleep.

83. Kisoyama is the mountainous region of southwest Shinano province.
84. The poem refers to lanterns offered and displayed at the temple.
85. Notices were posted outside villages at times of poor harvest informing priests and others that it was a waste of time to ask for alms of any kind.
86. Upon seeing himself Issa is reluctantly admitting that he is going bald.
87. Comp. Works. vol.6 p.14.
88. Komoriyama is a mountain in Ibaragi prefecture. On this mountain is the Sairin temple where Taira Masakado secluded himself. Issa is referring to this man.
- 88^a. This prose passage can also be found in 'Nanaban Nikki'. See Comp. Works vol.3 p.106.
89. Iwosaki is an old place name for part of the Mukaijima district of Edo.
90. Mokubo temple in east Edo.
91. The same prose passage is found in 'Nanaban Nikki' Comp. Works vol.3. p.122.
92. The temple referred to is the Daijō temple in the town of Tomitsu, where Issa's friend and patron Tokua was the priest in charge.
93. Now part of the town of Tomitsu in Chiba prefecture.
94. Issa here uses a phrase which alludes to a similar one used by the poet Saigyō. Comp. Works vol.6 p.30.
95. In Edo times a permit from the chief of the hair-dressers' guild was required before one could practise.
96. Imacho is a the old name for the town of Jōetsu on the western seaboard in Niigata prefecture..
97. Ryūsō was a magistrate in the town of Zenkōji. A poet friend of Issa's.
98. Hatoyama, a small village in the Shimosa area.
99. An estate previously held by the Harita family, a daimyō family which was dispossessed in 1679 of its estates in Katori.

100. Fugawa:now part of Rine town, Ibaragi prefecture.
101. The place name Hatoyama translates literally as Dove Mountain. The verse, which Issa composed, sees the villagers as the doves of Dove Mountain and the unruly samurai as hawks, a play on words.
102. Ōmigawa:small town in Chiba prefecture on the banks of the Rine river.
103. Ōminami:a small vottage south-east of Ōmigawa.
104. Comp.Works vol.5 p.125.
105. Momokubi:a district on the coast of present day Kanagawa prefecture overlooking the Straits of Uraga.
106. Uraga:coastal town in Kanagawa prefecture.
107. Issa signs himself 'Fumaizenji', a priestly name, because he, in asking the recipient to burn the letter on behalf of the dead and because of the religious tone of its contents, is acting the part of a priest.
108. Nakamura Keikoku was a son of the Nakamura house-hold which was next door to Issa's old home. He was a boyhood friend of Issa and remained a friend throughout his life.
109. Issa uses, from this point, some of the same words and phrases that he has already used in his elegy to Kōshun. Comp.Works vol.3 p.26.
110. Written on the occasion of his first marriage.
111. Buson:Issa, Nihon Bungaku Kenkyu Shiryō p.263.
112. Ito. p.29-32.
113. Maruyama p.98.
114. Comp.Works vol.3 p.26.
115. Ibid. vol.3 p.117.
116. shōbuzake:made by soaking the bulbs of the iris plant in rice-wine.It was drunk on the 5th. of May each year in order to rid the body of uncleanness.Also known as ayamezake.
117. Comp.Works vol.3 p.332.
118. Ibid. p.375.
119. " p.539 and 544.
120. " p.120.
121. Comp.Works vol.5 p.15.
122. Ibid. vol.2 p.472.
123. " vol.3 p.52.
124. " vol.3 p.356.
125. " vol.bekkan p.262.
126. " " p.221.
127. " vol.3 p.102.
128. " vol.4 p.175.
129. " vol.3 p.92.
130. Kuriyama p.152.
131. Comp.Works bekkan p.272.

132. This is a personal observation and knowledge gained through conversation with enthusiasts in Hiratsu cho Otsu city.
133. Comp.Works vol.3 p.540.
134. Ibid. p.540.
135. " p.281.
136. " p.281.
137. Buson:Issa, Nihon Bungaku Kenkyu Shiryō. p.290.
138. Murata p.68. Also Issa:Buson, Nihon Bungaku Shiryō p.290.
139. Comp.Works vol.3 p.558.
140. Ibid. bekkann p.264. See also vol.6 p.123.
141. Kaneko p.182-184.
142. Murata p.92.
143. Comp.Works bekkann p.219. 'Shitagire Susume' is a traditional children's story with a Buddhist moral.
144. Comp.Works vol.3 p.431.
145. Ibid. p.417.
146. Ibid. vol.6 p.149.
147. Ibid. vol.3 p.37,39,41 etc.
148. Ito p.37-39.
149. Ito. p.41-42.
150. Comp.Works vol.bekkan p.147-211.
151. Ibid. p.148.
152. " "
153. " vol.6.p.103.
154. " Vol.7. p.78,89,216,223,237 and 240.
155. " vol.3 p.329.
156. Ito p.298-301.
157. Ibid. p.310.
158. Buson:Issa, Nihon Koten Bungaku Kanshō. p.302-303.
159. Comp.Works vol.3 p.89, 95, 133, 144, 216, 287 and 327. See also Ito p.305-306.
160. Comp.Works vol.6 p.431-432.
161. Ibid. vol.3 p.173.

Section 5. THE BUNSEI PERIOD. 1818 - 1827.

Selected Translations.

(a). Hachiban Nikki.

Hachiban Nikki contains 3086 verses, all of which are by Issa. There is very little prose in this diary, just comments upon the time and place, and the weather. There are very occasional brief notes upon the circumstances of some 20 poems.

There are two extant copies of this diary. Neither are originals. The title Hachiban Nikki was added by the transcribers and is most likely not Issa's own title for this work. The two manuscripts are not identical. The one from which these selections are taken, known as the Fuma manuscript after the name of the man who copied it, has some 400 verses more than the other manuscript which is known as the Baijin copy.¹

The Fuma manuscript was made in 1851, twenty four years after Issa's death. The date of the Baijin manuscript is not known.

Hachiban Nikki covers the period from the 1st. of Jan.

1819 until the 31st of Dec. 1821. During this time Issa's second child Sato died, Issa himself was struck down with palsy and his third child was born and died within a few months.

Many of the verses found in Issa's famous work Ora ga Haru are also found in this diary.

Selected Translations.

BUNSEI 2nd. year. (1819).

5.1. Hae warae futatsu ni naru zo kesa kara wa.²

Laugh and crawl,
Into this your second year,
From this morning!

5.2. Yama no tsuki hana no nusubito o terashi tamou.

Moon over the mountains
Shine down upon
The man,
Who steals flowers.

5.3. Nodokasa ya asama no keburu hiru no tsuki.

How calm and peaceful,
Smoke from mount Asama³
And the daylight moon.

5.4. Hatauchi ya ko ga aruku tsukushibara.

Tilling the soil,
While the child walks
Among the fields
Of horsetail grasses.

5.5. Nabe no shiri hoshi narabetaru yukige kana.

Pots and pans,
Bottoms up
In lines to dry,
As the snow thaws.

5.6. Matsushima ya kosumi wa kurete naku hibari.

Ah, Matsushima,
As dusk falls upon a distant isle
The skylark sings.

5.7. Hana chiru ya matsudai muchi no bonpushu.

The blossoms scatter,
 Scatter down upon,
 Forever ignorant,
 The common crowd.

5.8. Medashi kara hito sasu kusa wa nakarikeri.

When tiny green shoots,
 There are no plants
 Which prick or sting.

5.9. Hakidame no aka motoyui⁴ ya haru no ame.

Swept up with the dust,
 In the pile of sweepings
 A red paper hair ribbon.
 Spring rains.

5.10. Monzen ya kodomo no tsukuru yukige kawa.

Before the gate,
 Rivulets
 Made by the children
 From the thawing snow.

5.11. Kasumu hi ya shinkan toshite . . ōzashiki.

On a misty day
 In solemn silence stands
 The large house.

5.12. Yamahata ya koyashi no tashi ni chiru sakura.

On mountain fields
 A supplement for manure
 The cherry blossoms fall.

5.13. Kourusai hana ga saku tote nejaka kana.

"They're a bit of a nuisance
 Those flowering blossoms",
 Says
 The reclining Buddha.

- 5.14. Waga kado wa shidare kirai no yanagi kana.
 The willow at my gate
 Dislikes the fact
 That it has to hang there!
- 5.15. Kado yanagi atama de wakete hairikeri.
 Willow at the gate,
 I enter
 Parting its branches
 With my head.
- 5.16. Susume no ko soko noke noke ouma ga tōru.
 Get out of the way, little sparrows
 Get out of the way!
 His Lordship's horse
 Is passing by.
- 5.17. Sakura sakura to utawareshi oi ki kana.⁵
 "Cherry blossoms, cherry blossoms",
 Thus the song was sung
 But now the tree is old.
- 5.18. Mihotoke ya nete gozattemo hana to zen.
 The honorable image of Buddha,
 Even though asleep receives
 Money and flowers!
- 5.19. Toshiyori to miru ya naku ka mo mimi no kiwa.
 Seeing that I am old
 The mosquito whines
 Very close to my ear!
- 5.20. Yo ga yokuba mo hitotsu tomare meshi no hae.
 If times are better
 One more of you can stay!
 Flies at my food..

- 5.21. Hae harau no mo nagusami ya ko no negao.
 Brushing the flies away,
 This, too, is comforting.
 The child's sleeping face.
- 5.22. Kasa no hae mo kyō kara edo mono zo.
 Flies on my wicker hat
 From today
 Are flies of Edo!
- 5.23. Mamakko ya suzumi shigoto ni wara tataki.
 The step-child,
 His job in the evening coolness,
 Beating the straw.
- 5.24. Karabito mo mi yo ya taue no fue taiko.
 Hey, you Chinamen, too,
 Look!
 The flutes and the drums
 At rice planting time.
- 5.25. Zeni nashi wa aogusa mo mizu mon suzumi.
 Those without money
 See no greenery
 In the evening coolness at the gate.
- 5.26. Hitori tōru to kabe ni kaku aki no kure.⁶
 "Gone on alone",
 I write on the wall
 As the autumn evening falls.
- 5.27. Hajime kara tsuripanashi naru shichō kana.
 Left hanging,
 Just left hanging from before,
 The paper screen.

5.28. Obotaru yurari yurari to tōrikeri.

The huge firefly
 Meandering with heavy grace
 Passes by..

5.29. Yūdachi ya jukasekijo no koyakunin.

In the evening downpour,
 Sitting upon a stone under a tree
 As if seeking enlightenment!
 The minor official.

5.30. Ari no michi kumo no mine yori tsuzukikeri.

The line of ants
 Stretches on and on
 As if it came from the peaks
 Of the towering clouds!

5.31. Oki oki no yokume hipparu aota kana.

As morning follows morning
 They stir within me
 Ever increasing partiality
 My green fields.

5.32. Meigetsu ya zen ni haiyoru ko ga araba.

Full moon.
 If only there were a child
 To crawl towards
 My tray of food.

5.33. Yūgiri ya uma no oboeshi hashi no ana.

In the evening mist
 The horse remembers
 The hole in the bridge.

5.34. Hito no yo wa tsuki mo nayamase tamaikeri.

This world of men,

Even the moon

Is grieved by it!

- 5.35. Raku raku to nete saki ni keri na nashi kiku.

Just as it pleases

Bent low upon the ground

It blooms,

A common chrysanthemum.

- 5.36. Kotoshimai oya to iu ji o ogamikeri.

This year's new rice,

With reverence for the word

"Father".

- 5.37. Kōrogi no tobu ya tōmi no hokori saki.

The grasshopper jumps,

Just ahead of the dust

From the winnowing fan.

- 5.38. Aki kaze ya jishaku ni ateru kokyō yama.

In the autumn wind

The compass aligns

With the mountains of home.

- 5.39. Hohopeta ni ate nado suru ya akai kaki.⁷

To my cheek

I hold

A red persimmon.

- 5.40. Furusato wa hae sura hito o sashi ni keri.

My old home town,

Where even the flies

Bite and sting!

- 5.41. Kogarashi ya nijūshi mon no yūjogoya.

In the winter bleakness,

The "two shillings a time" harlot's
Little house.

- 5.42. Kogarashi ya kara yobi sareshi anmabō.⁸

In the winter bleakness,
Though none have hired him
His call resounds,
The blind masseur.

- 5.43. Shigururu ya oya wan tataki oshi kojiki.

In the early winter rain,
Tapping the edge of the begging bowl,
Dumb beggar with child.

- 5.44. Kogarashi ya yukinuki roji no kazusa yama.

In the winter bleakness,
A short cut,
At the end of the alley-way
Mount Kazusa.⁹

- 5.45. Jūbako no zenī shigomon ya yushigure.¹⁰

In the old lacquered lunch box,
Four or five pennies
In the evening shower
Of early winter rain.

- 5.46. Kogarashi ya orisuke kaeru samusabashi.

In the winter bleakness,
On his way home
The samurai's servant
Crosses the Cold Cold bridge.

NB. Samusabashi was a
bridge in the Kyōbashi
region of Edo near
Tsukijigashi.
See Maruyama p.170

- 5.47. Suzushisa ya jinko mo takazu he mo herazu.¹¹

Ah, the coolness.
Though I don't burn aloes wood
Neither do I fart!

- 5.48. Abaraga ya sono mi sono mama ake no haru.

Old broken down house,
Just be as you are,
Just do as you please!
At the close of spring.

- 5.49. Osagari ya kusa no iori mo mori hajime.

Rain!
On the third day of January
The thatched roof on my dwelling leaks
For the first time this year!

- 5.50. Yuki chiru ya odoke mo ienu shinano sora.

Snow flutters down,
Now none can laugh or joke!
Shinano skies.

- 5.51. Fuyugomori ika monogui o naraikeri,

Snowed in for the winter,
Now we must learn to eat
Unusual foods!

- 5.52. Kakichin no mikan mii mii kissho kana.¹²

Writing greetings
While gazing at the tangerines
The reward for the task!

BUNSEI 3rd. YEAR. (1820).

- 5.53. Uguisu no mate ni aruku ya kumi yashiki.

The nightingale
Walks so courteously past
The policeman's dwelling!

- 5.54. Hito aji no zakuro e hawasu shirami kana.¹³

On the pomegranate,
 The flesh of which looks so like man's,
 There to crawl
 I placed the flea!

- 5.55. Higan tote sode ni hawasuru shirami kana.¹⁴
 Saying, "It is the week we remember the mercy of
 I take the flea Buddha",
 And put it on my sleeve!

- 5.56. Minashigo no ware wa hikarenu hotaru kana.¹⁵
 I, the orphan
 Am like a firefly
 Whose light does not shine!

- 5.57. Harusame ya dojō no noboru hodo no taki.
 Spring rains.
 A waterfall small enough
 For a loach to climb!

- 5.58. Harusame ya imo ga tamoto ni zenī no oto.¹⁶
 Spring rains.
 In the long sleeves of the woman's kimono
 The chink of coins.

- 5.59. Harusame ya neko ni odori o oshieru ko.
 Spring rains.
 The child teaches the cat
 To dance.

- 5.60. Harusame ya samurai futari inu no tomo.
 Spring rains.
 Two samurai
 Take the master's dog
 For a walk.

- 5.61. Tsuno ochite hazukashige nari yama no shika.
 With antlers shed,
 Looking embarrassed,
 Mountain deer.
- 5.62. Tanominaki ore ga sashitemo tsuku ki kana.
 Even though planted
 By worthless me,
 The tree grows!
- 5.63. Ato domo wa kasumi hiki keri kaga no kimi.
 Tail end
 Of the column of retainers
 Still emerging from the mist,
 The Lord of Kaga passes by.
- 5.64. Ta no hito o kokoro de ogamu hirune kana.
 Workers in the fields,
 In my heart
 I hold you in reverence,
 As I take my afternoon nap!
- 5.65. Ta no hito yo gomen sorae hirune kaya.
 Workers in the fields
 I pray please have me excused,
 Under the mosquito net
 For an afternoon nap!
- 5.66. Kaya tsurite kui ni deru nari yūchazuke.
 From under the hanging mosquito net
 Out I come to feed
 On an evening meal
 Of green tea over rice.
- 5.67. Suzushisa ya nori no kawakanu koandon.

Evening coolness.

The paste yet undried

On the little paper lantern.

5.68. Yamakiku no sugu narikerashi onozu kara.

The wild chrysanthemum

Seems to have grown up perfectly straight

All by itself!

5.69. Iwao niwa toku nare sazare ishitarō.¹⁸

Grow quickly,

Become a great rock,

Little pebble

Ishitarō.

5.70. Harumeku ya yabu arite yuki arite yuki.

Spring dawning,

The thicket

The snow

Then yet more snow.

5.71. Erinari ni fukikomi yuki ya makura moto.

Seen from my pillow

"V" shaped is the snow

Blown in through the door.

BUNSEI 4th. YEAR. (1821).

5.72. Kotoshi kara marumōke zo yo shaba asobi.

From this year on

My life is all clear gain

For worldly pleasures!

5.73. Kagami mochi iwaishikai mo naku karasu.¹⁹

Rounded rice cakes

Offered in celebration of the New Year

But to no effect,
The crow caws.

- 5.74. Haha oya o shimo yoke ni shite neta ko kana.

With mother
Keeping off the frost
The child fell asleep.

- 5.75. Kagerō ya me ni tsukimatou waraigao.²⁰

Fleetingly
It floats before my misty eyes
His smiling face.

- 5.76. Nadeshiko no naze oreta zo yo oreta zo yo.

Little flowering pink,
Your stem, why did it break?
Why, oh why, did it break?

- 5.77. Bosatsutachi goshutsugen are hana no kumo.

Heavenly Buddhas
Come, reveal yourselves
From flowering clouds of cherry blossom!

- 5.78. Bōfura no hitori asobi ya nuridarai.

Mosquito larvae
Playing all by themselves
In the lacquered pail.

- 5.79. Ore toshite suma ikken ka kasa no hae.

Along with me
Are you taking a look at Suma,²¹
Flies on my wicker hat?

- 5.80. Yare utsu na hae ga te o suri ashi o suru.²²

Don't swat that fly!
See, it rubs together
Its hands, its feet!

5.81. Shiru no mi no tashi ni saki keri kiku no hana.

You will supplement
The taste of my soup
Chrysanthemum flower!

5.82. Make sumō muri ni geta geta warai keri.

The losing wrestler,
Forced smile
Upon his face.

5.83. Geko no tatetaru kura mo nashi toshi no kure.

The non-drinker
For all his temperance
Hasn't built a storehouse!
The year draws in.

5.84. Tsuyu no yo to osharu kuchi yori kenka kana.

From the same mouth
Which declares "The world is dew"
Comes a quarrel!

5.85. Ariai no yama de sumasu ya kyō no tsuki.

Making do with
The hills before me,
I view the moon this night.

5.86. Yuku aki ya ikai gokurō kakemashita.

Autumn passes,
And we thank it
For all its efforts
On our behalf!

5.87. Kogarashi ya tonari to iu mo kawa no mukō.

Winter bleakness.
Though our nearest neighbour,
The house is on the other side of the river!

- 5.88. Gokuraku ya chikaku naru mi no samusa kana.

Ah, the coldness
Of the body
Of him that is close
To heavenly bliss!

- 5.89. Ganjitsu mo tatsu no mama naru kuzuya kana.

New Year's Day,
Yet there it stands
The same as always,
The 'rag and bone' man's house!

- 5.90. Shimogare ya nabe no sumi kaku kokeisei.

Frosty coldness.
With no charcoal
With which to heat the pot,
A young woman of the streets.

(b). Kubun. A Strange Tale of the Myōsen Temple.²³ (Thought²⁴ to have been written about 1819).

Just like the gusting wind that comes and goes, I do not think there is any real basis for this tale, indeed if it were believed the dumb Buddhist images, too, would laugh and we would also hear of the little stone images of the Buddha of travellers performing dances with outstretched hands!

In the grounds of the Myōsen temple lived an old fox which²⁵ night after night changed itself into the form of a temple priest, went to the main hall of the temple and there in a commendable manner prostrated himself before the image of Buddha, struck the little worship bell and there, with feeling, repeated the Buddhist invocations.

"Why should a mere animal desire thus to gain Buddhahood?" the villagers said to each other in their amazement.

I, too, thought I would like to see this thing for myself before I depart this world and so just after early evening from around eight o'clock I hid in the shadow of the trees and with bated breath waited, all the time thinking, "Now, yes now, something will appear", but before I knew it the night ended, the sky brightened and the song of the birds filled the air!

5.91. Fuwa fuwa to deta wa midō no yabu ka kana.

Softly, softly,

All that appeared

Were the temple mosquitoes!

5.92. Yanagi kara akete nakikeri hotogisu.

The morning breaks

And from the willows

The cuckoo sings.

(c). Ora ga Haru. (1819).

No introduction is given to this work here because it will be treated more fully in the critical assessment of the 'The Year of My Life' by Nobuyuki Yuasa which will follow this chapter.

The following selected translations are taken from Mr. Yuasa's work.

Selected translations.

Chapter one.

Once upon a time there lived a priest in the temple of Fukōji in the province of Tango, and he was full devout of heart. This priest desired to celebrate the festival of the New Year with all possible joy, according to the custom. Therefore, when New Year's Eve came round, he wrote a letter and handed it to his acolyte. He gave the acolyte special instructions where he was to deliver it on the following morning, and sent him off to the main hall to spend the night. The morning of New Year's Day the acolyte rose early - at the sound of the first crow - and while the shadows were still clinging in the corners, he went to the front door of the priest's lodge and knocked, as he had been instructed. The priest's voice was heard from within, inquiring who it was, and the acolyte replied he was a messenger from Amida, the Buddha of the Pure Land of the West, and that he bore a New Year's greeting. No sooner had the priest heard these words than he dashed to the door in his bare feet, and flung it wide open. He ushered the messenger into his room and seated him in the place of honor. Taking the letter from his hand, he opened it and read;

"Forsake the world of anguish and despair,
And hasten to the Land of the Pure.
I shall not fail to meet thee on the way
With a host of blessed saints."

The priest was deeply moved by the message and wept until his sleeves were soaked in tears.

This story may strike you as being rather odd, for certainly no ordinary person would choose to greet the New Year, his sleeves wet with weeping - his eyes flowing tears that he himself had deliberately provoked. Yet, I can imagine no better way for a priest - whose primary duty is to teach the word of Buddha to his people - to celebrate the festival of New Year's Day.

My own way of celebrating the first of the year is somewhat different, since the dust of the world still clings to me. Yet I am like him still in this;- I, too, forebear to use the commonplace congratulations of the season. The words "crane" and "tortoise" ring hollow on my ear, like the greetings of the begging actors. Nor will I set the customary pine beside my door, nor sweep the dust out of my house for I live in a tiny cottage that might be swept away at any moment by a blast from the wild north wind. I will leave it all to Buddha, and though the path ahead be difficult and steep, like a snow-covered road winding through the mountains, I welcome the New Year - even as I am.

Only
Moderately happy
Is my spring
My New Year..

My little daughter was born just last May, but I give her a grownup's portion of 'zōni' (rice cakes boiled with vegetables) for her New Year's breakfast.

Crawl, laugh,
Do as you wish-
For you are two years old
This morning.

On the first of January, in the Second Year of Bunsei (1819).
(From 'The Year of My Life. p. 37/8).

-----//-----

Chapter Twelve.

Last summer, when the day for setting out bamboo slips was drawing nigh, a child was born to us. We named her Sato, hoping she might grow in wisdom, despite the fact that she was born in ignorance.. This year, when her

birthday came round, she bobbed her head at us, and waved her hands, and cried, which was her way of telling us she wanted a paper windmill of a kind that was then extremely popular among the small children. So we bought one for her. But she soon set to licking it and sucking it, and finally, with prodigal indifference, she flung it away. Her mind seems to flit from one thing to another, resting nowhere. Now she is busy with a clay pot, but soon she smashes it. Next she will be fascinated by a paper screen but soon she tears it. And if we praise her for her actions she accepts our approval at face value, and smiles delightedly. Not a cloud crosses her tiny mind. She is pure moonlight, and beams all over from head to foot, delighting us far more than the most accomplished performer on the stage could possibly do. Occasionally a visitor will ask her to point out a dog or a bird to him, and at such times she is completely captivated - from the tip of her toes to the top of her little head. She seems just like a butterfly, poised lightly on a sprig of young grass, resting her wings.

I believe this child lives in a special state of grace, and enjoys divine protection from Buddha. For when the evening comes when once a year we hold a memorial service for the dead, and have lit the candles on the family altar, and rung the bell for prayer, she crawls out swiftly, wherever she may be, and softly folds her tiny hands, like little bracken sprouts, and says her prayers in such a sweet, small voice - in such a lovely way! For myself, I am old enough that my hair is touched with frost, and every year adds waves of wrinkles to my brow, yet so far I have not found grace with Buddha, and waste my days and months in meaningless activity. I am ashamed to think my child, who is only two years old, is closer to the truth than I. And yet no sooner do I leave the altar than I sow the seeds of future torments, hating the flies that crawl across my knees, killing the mosquitoes that swarm around the table, and even worse, drinking the wine that Buddha has prohibited.

Just as I was reproaching myself in this fashion the moonlight touched our gate, adding a breath of coolness to the

evening air. A group of children dancing outside suddenly lifted their voices and cried aloud. My little girl at once threw down the little bowl she had been playing with and crawled out to the porch, where she, too, cried out and stretched forth her hands to the moon. Watching her I quite forgot my old age and my sinful nature, and indulged myself with the reflection that when she should be old enough to boast long hair with waving curls, we might let her dance, and that would be more beautiful, I fancied, than to hear the music of the twenty-five celestial maidens.

Not a day passes in which she gives her legs a moment's rest, at least during the daylight hours. Therefore, when night comes, she is tired out and sleeps soundly until the sun is high in the sky the following morning. Her mother takes advantage of her being in bed to do the cooking and the cleaning. When these are all completed she only has a short time left to rest and catch her breath before the child wakes up. As soon as she hears the child crying in her room, she takes her up from her bed and carries her out to the yard to relieve herself. Then she nurses her. The child sucks her mother's milk with a smile on her face, and gently taps her breast to express her happiness. At this moment the mother forgets entirely all the pain she suffered in her womb and all the dirty diapers she must wash each day. She yields herself completely to the joy of having a child - joy more precious than jewels.

Nursing her child
On the bed, the mother
Counts the flea bites
On her tiny body.

Poems on kindred themes, gathered here as playmates for this little poem on my child;

Out of the willow
A child stepped forth,
With the face
Of a monstrous ghost.

Child as he is,
 He bows his head
 To the sacred offerings
 Of the New Year.

Asked how old he was,
 A boy in a new kimono
 Stretched out
 All five fingers.

A poem of felicitation for a little child;

Congratulations!
 Faster than our hopes
 You have outgrown
 Your first skirt.

A child weeping
 Bids me
 Pluck the full moon
 From the sky.

The laughing children
 Around the fire-
 The only treasures
 In the house.

A child arranges
 Rice cakes in a row,
 Each time saying
 "This one is mine".

The rice cakes
 For our neighbors
 Weigh heavily upon
 My daughter's shoulders.

All alone
 Beneath a decorated tree
 A child claps his hands
 Happily at play

-----//-----

Chapter Fourteen.

It is a commonplace of life that the greatest pleasure issues ultimately in the greatest grief. Yet why - why is it that this child of mine, who had not tasted half the pleasures that the world has to offer, who ought, by rights, to be as fresh and green as the vigorous young needles on the everlasting pine - why must she lie here on her deathbed, swollen with blisters, caught in the loathsome clutches of the vile god of pox? Being, as I am, her father, I can scarcely bear to watch her withering away - a little more each day - like some pure, untainted blossom that is ravished by the sudden onslaught of mud and rain.

After two or three days, however, her blisters dried up and the scabs began to fall away - like a hard crust of dirt that has been softened by the melting snow. In our joy we made a boat with fresh straw, and pouring hot wine ceremoniously over it, sent it down the river with the god of smallpox on it. Yet our hopes proved all in vain. She grew weaker and weaker, and finally on the twenty-first of June, as the morning-glories were just closing their flowers she closed her eyes for ever. Her mother embraced her cold body and cried bitterly. For myself - I knew well it was no use to cry, that water once flown past the bridge does not return, and blossoms that are scattered are gone beyond recall. Yet try as I would, I could not, simply could not cut the binding cord of human love.

The world of dew
Is the world of dew,
And yet....
And yet....

As I remarked above, I had left my home on the sixteenth of April, bound for the far north. However, I had journeyed no farther than Zenkōji temple, when something happened which caused me to turn back. As I reflect upon it now, I cannot help but feel it was the kindness and consideration of the God of Travellers that brought me home.

-----//-----

Chapter Twenty-one.

Those who insist on salvation by faith and devote their minds to nothing else, are bound all the more firmly by their singlemindedness, and fall into the hell of attachment to their own salvation. Again, those who are passive and stand to one side waiting to be saved, consider that they are already perfect and rely rather on Buddha than themselves to purify their hearts - these, too, have failed to find the secret of genuine salvation. The question then remains - how do we find it? But the answer, fortunately, is not difficult.

We should do far better to put this vexing problem of salvation out of our minds altogether and place our reliance neither on faith nor on personal virtue, but surrender ourselves completely to the will of Buddha. Let him do as he will with us - be it to carry us to heaven or to hell. Herein lies the secret.

Once we have determined on this course, we need care nothing for ourselves. We need no longer ape the busy spider by stretching the web of our desires across the earth, nor emulate the greedy farmer by taking extra water into our own fields at the expense of our neighbors. Moreover, since our minds will be at peace, we need not always be saying our prayers with hollow voice, for we shall be entirely under the benvolent direction of Buddha.

This is the salvation - this peace of mind we teach in our religion. Blessed be the name of Buddha.

Trusting to Buddha
 Good and bad,
 I bid farewell
 To the departing year.

Written on this twenty-ninth day of December, in the second year of Bunsei (1819), at the age of fifty-seven.

----//----

(d). Kubun. New Year Supplication to Mida Buddha.(1820).

My head is now crowned with hoary whiteness and my age is such that wrinkles like waves have come upon my brow. I have spent my days and months thoughtlessly without supplications to Mida Buddha. Who knows when my time upon this earth will end? Having forgotten that the years have rolled past I now find that I am over fifty years of age and the moon of my life, a life lived but once, is now setting towards the mountains of the west and I stand amazed that the dewlike silver cord of life has remained for me unbroken till this day.

I too, like the crane and the turtle²⁷ will celebrate this new year and put out the pine decorations!

5.93. Mida butsu o tanomi ni akete kesa no haru.

With supplication

To Mida Buddha

I greet the dawn

Of this New Year..

(e). Kubun. Lament Over the Death of Ishitarō. (Jan.1821).

It seems to me just as the famous sage, with a heavy sigh once said, "It is a difficult thing indeed to nurture women and children, if you keep distant from them they become jealous and if you keep too close to them they become
²⁸arrogant!". How much more so it is in these the last times. My old woman Kiku has a stubborn streak in her. Whenever I caution her for her own good, to her I am just ranting on and my words are just so much wind, blowing high over her head!. She takes no notice whatever of what I say and for
²⁹this reason both our first two children have met with untimely deaths.

This child was our third and thinking that the same kind of thing that has happened before will happen again, out of deep concern for the baby and in the hopes that he would live a long and healthy life and not be smothered to death by his mother, we called him Ishitaro. We did this in the hope that he would become like a strong firm rock, able easily to withstand the winds and rain. I made it clear to his mother saying, "This little 'stone' must not be carried on your back at all until he is over one hundred days old and thus strong enough to be carried so".

A thousand times a day I repeated the same but what happens? Today, just as the boy is ninety six days old she puts him on her back in the morning and thus killed
³⁰him! What a wretched thing it is to see the bitterness of death upon that little face that was until this morning smiling happily. Aah, to think we named him 'stone' only for him to become a headstone in the graveyard! Aah, what a fate is ours that tragedy upon tragedy should thus befall

us.

5.94. Warui yume nomi atari keri naku karasu.

Only the bad dreams

Ever come true.

The crow caws.

How I would like to break the New Year rice cake and
celebrate but now the smoke rises from the charnel house.

5.95. Mō ichido semete me o ake zōni zen.

Once more,

Just once more,

Open your eyes.

Rice-cake broth upon the tray.

On the 17th. at his graveside.

5.96. Kagerō ya me ni tsukimatou waraigao.

Fleetingly

It floats

Before my misty eyes,

His smiling face.

5.97. Yuku mizu no ato e modoranu kuyami to wa

shiritsutsu nāmida nagaretsuru kana.

Flowing water having once flowed by

Never will return.

Yes, this I know

And yet tears flow

In grief.

5.98. Mugorashi ya kawai ya to nomi omoi ne no

nemuru hima sae yume ni mietsutsu.

"How cruel, how sad",

Is all that fills my thoughts
And in spare moments when I drowse,
Even then, within my dreams
I see him.

(f). Bunsei Kuchō.

The Bunsei Kuchō covers the period from Jan. 1822 until Dec. 1825. It contains 3672 verses 119 of which are in the longer 'waka' style. The original is in existence though in two parts. The first part, which covers the first three years, is in the hands of a family by the name of Yumoto of Yamanouchi town in Nagano prefecture while the manuscript for the final year is owned by the Saburi family of Aichi prefecture.³¹

The title for this collection of verses was added later in 1928 when they were published for the first time. When first published the Bunsei Kuchō was known as the 'Kyuban Nikki' or in English 'Diary Number Nine'. This is the last existent work in Issa's own hand.

In 1926 copied manuscripts of verses by Issa were also found in the storehouse of the Yumoto family. These were for the Years Bunsei 9th. and 10th. i.e. 1826 and 1827. These manuscripts contain 101 and 56 verses respectively. They are the last verses of Issa's to be discovered and indicate that Issa was still writing haiku verses up to the time of his death in 1828. They are found in Issa's Complete works under the title 'Bunsei KuJūnen Kuchō³²
Utsushi'.

Selected Translations.

BUNSEI 5th. YEAR. (1822).

Jan. 1st.

It is said that in the light of the morning star the Buddha found enlightenment after forty-nine³³ years Without the truth. But here am I still an uncouth

and ignorant commoner after fifty-nine years of life,
 wandering from darkness into yet further darkness without
 the ability to see even the light of the moon in the distance
 afar off. From time to time I have endeavoured to
 mend my mistaken ways but in my utter darkness I am like
 the blind man reading a book, or the lame man dancing!
 Thus I wander yet further and further into the gloom.
 It is indeed as the proverb says "There is no medicine
 for foolishness", and so before me lies only my own
 stupidity and ignorance. Thus unable to change, all I
 can hope is that I will be able just to continue as I am!

5.99 ³⁴ Manroku no haru to nari keri kado no yuki.

Thus satisfied to be

In this my sixtieth year.

Snow at the gate.

5.100 ³⁵ Kado no kari shingara kako mo jōzu nari.

Geese at the gate,

How cleverly they hop

On one leg.

5.101. Mamakko ya tsugi darake naru ikanobori.

The step-child,

See, his kite rises,

Covered with patches!

5.102. Hōdan no tetsuki mo kasumu midō kana.

Hand movements

Accompanying the sermon

Seen faintly through the haze

In the temple hall.

5.103. ³⁶ Hanakage mo kasanuge shita ni shita ni kana.

Even in the shade of the blossoms

"Off with your hat!

Get down, get down!"

5.104. Ni san mon zenī mo keshiki ya hana midō.

An offering

Of two or three pennies

Is also part of the scene

At the temple on Buddha's birthday.

5.105. Shimogare ya banya ni shirami usegusuri.

Frosty winter bleakness.

Sold at the local guardhouse

Ointment to keep the lice away!

5.106. Gyogyoshi taigawa wa shinto nagare kerī.

The reedwarbler

By the great river

Which flows by

With quiet heavy majesty.

5.107. Yūgao ni honobono miyuru yotaka kana.

The moonflower

Seen but faintly,

And a woman of the streets.

5.108. Kami no kumi ten kara kusuri furi ni kerī.³⁷

Land of the Gods!

From the heavens

Falls medicine!

5.109. Kumo no ko wa mina chirijiri no misugi kana.

Little spiders

Here and there

In all directions

Go their separate ways!

- 5.110. Wase no ka ya yosari mo miyuru kumo no mine.

Fragrance

Of early ripening ears of rice,
And in the evening, too, we see
The towering clouds.

- 5.111. Himajin ya ka ga deta deta to fure aruku.

The idler

Strolls around announcing,
"The mosquitoes are out,
The mosquitoes are out!"

- 5.112. Shita ni iyo iyo to goyō no kōri kana.³⁸

Get down, get down,
Ice

For His Lordship's use!

- 5.113. Sarashi i ni uo mo modaru ya kure no tsuki.

Back into the cleaned out well
The fishes are returned
Under the evening moon.

- 5.114. Mugi aki ya dodai no ishi mo ase o kaku.

Wheat harvesting time.
The foundation stones
Holding up the house
Also drip with sweat!

- 5.115. Rokujū nen odoru yo mo naku sugoshi keru.³⁹

Sixty years
Without one night of dancing
Have passed me by.

- 5.116. Suzukaze ya nani kuwasete mo ninin mae.

Cool breezes.
No matter what she is given to eat
It is for two!

- 5.117. Kakewan mo onaji nagare ya tatsuta kawa.⁴⁰
 A broken rice bowl
 Floats by
 In the same
 Tatsuta river.
- 5.118. Mo ichido doko zo de katsu yo kiku no hana.
 Displayed again
 In some other place
 You might win a prize next time
 Chrysanthemum flower!
- 5.119. Hatsuyuki ni ichi no takara no shibin kana.⁴¹
 When the snow begins to fall
 My greatest treasure is
 My little glass bed-urinal!
- 5.120. Hatsuyuki ya ware ni toritsuku bushōgami.
 First fall of winter snow.
 From now on it comes upon me,
 The spirit of idleness!
- 5.121. Shinibeta to soshiraba soshire yūkotatsu.
 Curse me then!
 Curse me if you will,
 For not dying soon enough!
 Evening at the hearthside.
- 5.122. Harukaze no onna mi ni deru onna kana.
 Spring breezes.
 Out to view the ladies
 Another lady goes!
- 5.123. Kaketori ga dozoku fumi komu irori kana.⁴²
 The debt collector,
 Feet yet shod

Bursts in upon
Those round the hearthside.

43
5.124. Hidayama no irihi yokotau irori kana.

Across from Hida mountain

The setting sun

Beams its rays

Upon the hearth.

5.125. Mamakko ya hai ni iroha no kan narai.

The step-child

Writing ABC in the ashes

Learns his letters

Out in the cold.

5.126. Utsukushiku abura no koru tomoshi kana.

How beautiful!

From the freezing oil

The lamplight glows.

BUNSEI 6th. YEAR. (1823).

5.127. Harutatsu ya gu no ue ni mata gu ni kaeru.

The New Year arrives,

On to my foolishness

Is added

Yet more foolishness still!

5.128. Zōkin no hoshidokoro naru kado no matsu.

Used to hang

The floor cloths out to dry!

Pine decorations at the gate.

44
5.129. Toshidama o atama ni oku ya chiisai ko.

New Year gift of money

Balanced upon his head

A little child.

5.130. Hito soshiru kai ga tatsu nari fuyugomori.

Thus are formed
 Little gatherings
 To speak ill of others,
 Snowed up for the winter!

5.131. Hiru no ka ya damari kokutte ushiro kara.

Mosquitoes at daytime
 In cunning silence
 Come from behind.

5.132. Io no ka yo fubin nagara mo rusu ni suru.

Mosquitoes in my house,
 Though it's inconvenient for you
 I'm going out!

5.133. Kono ame no furu ni dotchi deiro kana.

In this pouring rain
 To where
 Does one set out?

5.134. Nesetsukeshiko no sentaku ya natsu no tsuki.

The clothes
 Of the child sent off to sleep
 Hang out to dry
 Under the summer moon.

5.135. Kagerō ya sobaya no mae no hashi no yama.⁴⁵

Spring haze.
 In front of the buckwheat noodle shop
 A pile of chopsticks.

5.136. Tsubakura wa saishi sorōte kaeru nari.

Swallows
 Wife and child together
 Return to the nest.

5.137. Kogoto iu aite no hoshi ya aki no kure.

How I long

For someone to grumble at

As autumn draws in.

5.138. Kogoto iu aite wa kabe zo aki no kure.

The wall

The wall alone

Is all I have to grumble at

As autumn draws in.

5.139. Tsukunen to gu o mamoru nari hikigaeru.

With silence

Hiding his ignorance

The toad.

5.140. Yu no naka e furu ya hatsuyuki tabira yuki.

Falling

Into the hot bath water

Winters first snow

Large fluffy flakes.

5.141. Yoi sugi ya hashira miri miri kan ga iru.

Night deepens

The timbers creak

Creak with the cold,

Mid winter.

BUNSEI 7th. YEAR. (1823).

5.142. Harusame ya goten jotchū no kaigurai.

Spring rains.

The servant girl

From the daimyo's mansion

Buys a morsel and eats on her way.

5.143. Otoraji to ichimondako mo nobori keru.

Not to be outdone
The penny kite, too,
Climbs high in the sky.

5.144. Jihi sureba hako o suru nari susume no ko.

Though fed out of pity
It leaves its droppings behind!
The little sparrow.

5.145. Soyo soyo edo ki ni somanu yanagi kana.

Waving in the gentle breeze
Not yet at home in Edo air
A willow tree.

5.146. Uguisu ya gozen e dete mo onaji koe.

The nightingale
Though she sings at the palace
Her voice is the same.

5.147. Medetasa ya hiza aku hikaru koromogae.

Ah, this auspicious day,
On the first day of summer
The clothes I change into
Shine at the knees!

5.148. Osake no kangen suru ka kankodori.

Are you warning me
Not to drink too much
O cuckoo!?

5.149. Yasezune wa ka mo kirau tsui tōri.

Even the mosquitoes
Dislike my skinny knees,
They just fly past.

5.150. Ubasute ya nidome no tsuki mo sutekaneru.

The old grandmother
 Here forsaken might be,
 But who can forego
 A second gaze at the moon.

5.151. Mokuboji no kane no aida o kuina kana.

The bell of Mokubo temple
 Booms out low and long
 And in the intervals
 The moorhen clucks.

5.152. Kuru hito ga michi tsukeru nari mon no yuki.

The people who come
 Make a path
 Through the snow
 At my gate.

5.153. Tate no mono yoko ni senu ya fuyugomori.

Too lazy
 To even lay a finger down
 Let alone lift one!
 Snowed in for winter.

5.154. Io no yo ya samushi yabururu wa dono hashira.

At night in my house
 Which wooden pillar
 Will split with the cold?

5.155. Hana no kage taga hima kureshi usuzōri.⁴⁶

In the shade of the blossoms
 Who will let me rest?
 Straw sandals worn thin.

BUNSEI 8th. YEAR. (1824).

5.156. Kamiguni ya kusa mo ganjitsu kitto saku.

Land of the Gods!

On New Year's Day

Even the grass

Will bear flowers!

5.157. Jitto shite uma ni kagururu kaeru kana.

Perfectly still

Being sniffed at by a horse

A frog.

5.158. Mihotoke ya umaruru mane o shite zeni ga furu.

The image of Buddha

Pretending to be born

Again this year

Is rained upon with coins!

5.159. Sojo no atama no ue ya hae tsurumu.

On the head of the chief priest

Two flies

Coupling!

5.160. Sabishisa ni meshi o kū nari aki no kaze.

Eating my meal

In loneliness.

The autumn wind.

5.161. Yuku toshi ya kasegu ni oitsuku binbōgami.

The year passes by,

Close behind whatever I have earned

Comes

The God of Poverty!

5.162. Kodomora karasu mo majiru kuri hiroi.

Mingling among the children

Crows, too,

Picking up chestnuts.

5.163. Utsukushi ya toshi kurekirishi yoru no sora.

How beautiful,
As the year finally ends,
The sky at night.

BUNSEI 10th. YEAR. (1826).

5.164. Okuribi ya ima ni warera mo ano tōri.

Farewell fire at the funeral,
Soon the rest of us
Will go
The same way.

5.165. Ikimitama yagate warera mo komo no ue.

Living bodies
Living spirits,
Finally all we, too,
Will be layed out
Upon the straw mat.

5.166. Hana no kage nemaji mirai osoroshiki.

In the shade of the blossoms
I cannot sleep
For the future
Is too fearful.

(g). Kubun. Lament Over the Death of Kōnsaburo. (1823).

In the village of Akashibu,⁴⁷ at the foot of mount
⁴⁸Kurohime, there lived a woodsman of trustworthy character
 and open hearted honesty named Tomi Yueimon. It was
 considered that he would never depart from the path of
 virtue and many hired him to perform tasks which were
 beyond the strength of their own hands and he performed
 them year after year.

This year my wife's condition was very poor and I searched
 here and there for someone to act as a wet nurse for our
 child. At this Tomi Yueimon said, as if butter would not
 melt in his mouth, "My daughter's breasts are like casks
 with the stoppers left out, the way the milk pours from her
 it's like a waterfall. As a wet nurse she will be more than
 sufficient." At this, though not having seen the girl for
 myself, I counted upon his assurances and on the 16th. of
 April sent the child to Akashibu. As early as the evening
 of the 17th. news reached me that the child had diarrhea
 and so I sent various medicines and thus felt at ease
 about the situation.

From then on I gave my undivided attention to my sick wife.
 The real cause of her sickness was that she had to live
 in the house divided between us and my step-mother and
 step-brother. The thorny entanglement of our bitter
 personal relationship was too much for such a young and
 tender tree like her to bear. She had become heavy of
 heart and tired of life. The blessings of dew from the
 god of trees did not reach her and the healing rains of May
 passed her by. As the days went by her colour worsened,

and her brightness faded.

On the 12th., at daybreak the leaves fell gently down. What a blow it was to me! I grieved, and knowing that the blossom once scattered never returns to the branch, I sent someone to fetch the child so that he might see his mother for the last time and be with me at the funeral. Thus I called for him to be brought, but what was this?! He had changed completely. The little form that had laughed and had just begun to crawl around before he went to Akashibu had wasted away. He was now as thin as a board with skin stretched on either side and with bones jutting out grotesquely. He looked like the stony mountainside when covered with a thin layer of frost. His voice was small and rasping and sounded like a mosquito's whine, his arms and legs like thin little sticks of iron, and his pupil-less eyes

blazed while blinking lazily, half turned towards the sky. He was so light, like the shell of a cicada blown by the wind. He breathed only in small gasps like a fish taken out of the water. All who saw him said the same, that I would surely grieve for him, too, and that he was already as one departed from this life, that there was no chance at all of him surviving and that he would become, together with his mother, smoke rising from the charnel house.

Nevertheless, as the night my wife's body burned in her coffin drew to a close, the woman from Akashibu, alongside the others from here and there, lay in my house to sleep. This woman was very loath to let anyone see her breasts but just kept the baby's head hidden deeply in her bosom pretending to feed it while in actual fact surreptitiously giving him only water to drink. Wanting to see further

what she was doing I trimmed the lamp, strained my eyes and looked carefully. She was as flat chested as any man with no sign at all of anything that even resembled a woman's breasts! Knowing this I realised that I had been tricked. She had fed him water instead of milk and he had had diarrreah day after day all this time. Aah what a truly pitiful thing it all was and all he passed now was a light red bloody substance.

Aah! Tomi Yueimon, with the face of a man and the heart of a beast! What he had done was not the same as pulling the wool over another's eyes in order to steal his food and clothing. No, he had done a heartless, cruel and pitiless thing to a little life. Everyone, whether they knew Tomi Yueimon or not, with tears falling down their faces, agreed that this was so. Was it for money or because he held some bitter grudge against me that he has done this thing so fearful that he can hardly be called a human being?

5.167. Mono ienu warabe no kuchi o akashibu no mizu
hameru to wa oni mo esejinu.

To give a defenseless babe to drink

Nothing but the water of Akashibu,

No, not even a devil thus would think

Or such an evil do!

How the child must have felt in its suffering having not been suckled for over twenty days;

5.168. ⁴⁹
Chichi koishiku koishiku to ya minomushi no
naki akashi ken naki kurashi ken.

The babe awakening cries

Longing, yearning for the breast

And in the evening yet unfed

Cries himself to rest.

Bunsei 6th. year May 13th.

Section 5. THE BUNSEI PERIOD. 1818 - 1827.The Development of Issa's Distinctive Style.Introduction

This period covers Issa's final years, from 1818, when his daughter Sato was born, until 1827, when Issa died aged sixty-four. During this time Issa was never to visit Edo again and spent his time in Kashiwabara and its environs. For Issa this was a time of increasing infirmity, frequent sickness, great personal misfortune and seclusion from the poetic stimulus of life in Edo. Issa visited those who owned him as teacher and instructor in the haiku art as much as he could within Shinano but towards the end of this period such journeys became increasingly difficult for him.

This life style inevitably affected his poetry, it no longer developed but became stereotyped and stagnant. One searches in vain in the Hachiban Nikki and the Bunsei Kuchō for fresh innovations in word usage, further enlargement of the scope of his poetry or new and original poetic concepts or devices. Fine poetry can be found but not any that leads to further development of his style. We can only conclude that Issa's distinctive style of haiku poetry reached its highest level of development in the Nanaban Nikki and the composite kubun work that Issa wrote during the year 1819, 'Ora ga Haru'.

There are only two areas in which a clearer expression of Issa's feelings are evident. Issa's love for children is expressed in greater depth through the joy and sorrow the birth and death of his own children brought him. His religious conclusions, his personal faith, are expressed

with increasing clarity and confirm the development that we have traced thus far in his work in this sphere.

Although there is no further development in Issa's style this is not to say that his enthusiasm for writing haiku verse waned. Indeed one cannot but be amazed at the number of poems that Issa continued to write.⁵⁰ Sickness, infirmity and misfortune had no affect at all on his industry. Here Issa displayed his dogged determination, a characteristic of the people of the snowy parts of Japan, and confirms to us that haiku was indeed his life. In sickness he expressed himself in haiku, in grief his poetry revealed his sorrow, and his infirmity, too, found increasingly clear expression in his work. These final years reveal to us clearly that a great deal of the poetic energy in terms of creative poetry which we see in Issa's work was stimulus from the outside rather than inspiration from within. His inspiration needed the stimulus of hardship, discrimination and loneliness to stir it up. Without this he no longer developed his work further. Here we see another of the basic differences between Issa and Bashō; the depth of Bashō's work was a result of inspiration and insight into the very nature of the objects of his poetry whereas the novelty and originality of Issa was largely the reaction of his personality towards his experience. In this respect Issa's stagnation and creative inertia during this period are very natural.

Consequently, although his industry never waned, his poetry became a reworking of previous verses, the restating of previous concepts and the re-use of past devices.

Numerous examples of this can be found, among them would be included the following;

Compare verse ref. 4.238 with;

5.169. Yabujiri no saisenbako ya ume no hana.

On the edge of the thicket

A temple offertory chest.

Plum blossoms. Bunsei 2nd. year.

Verse ref. 4.104 with;

5.170. Kagerō no naka ni ugomoku shujō kana.

In the spring haze,

Twisting, squirming,

A mass of humanity! Bunsei 2nd. year

Verse ref. 5.19 with;

Toshiyori to mite ya ōgoe ni hototogisu.

Seeing that I am old

The cuckoo calls

With a loud voice! Bunka 13th year.

Verse ref. 4.224 with;

5.171. Kogarashi ya tonari to iu mo echigo yama.

Cold winter bleakness.

Even though called neighbours,

The mountains of Echigo. Bunsei 2nd year.

Verse ref. 4.36 with verse ref. 5.84.

Verse ref. 4.70 with verse ref. 5.120.

Verse ref. 4.67 with;

5.172. Aka uma no hana de fuitaru hotaru kana.

Blown away

By the snorts

Of a working horse,

A firefly. Bunsei 6th. year.

Verse ref. 4.401 with;

- 5.173. Nezake iza toshi ga yukō to yukumai to.
 Rice wine in bed,
 What if the year does end
 Or if it doesn't! Bunsei 8th. year.

Verse ref. 4.59 with;

- 5.174. Namu namu to meigetsu ogamu kodomo kana.
 "Mercy, mercy upon us"
 Adoring the full moon
 The child prays. Bunsei 8th. year.

Verse ref. 4.24 with;

- 5.175. Kodomora ya karasu mo majiru kuri hiroi.
 Mingled with the children
 Crows, too,
 Picking up chestnuts. Bunsei 8th. year.

Verse ref. 4.258 with;

- 5.176. No bakuchi no zeni no naka yori kochō kana.
 Gambling in the fields
 And amidst the coins
 A little butterfly! Bunsei 4th. year.

Such examples can be found in great number in the Hachiban Nikki and Bunsei Kuchō. There is often just a slight change in the wording of previous poems but the basic concept remains the same. This general trend covers almost every aspect of his work in this final period. In many cases the earlier poems are better haiku than the later ones and even when there is a technical improvement in the later verses they are so obviously based upon former poems that they lose their freshness and impact.

Though there is very little new development in Issa's poetry there are many fine verses and all the major characteristics of his poetry as seen in the Nanaban Nikki find expression during these final years.

Poems on the themes of poverty and loneliness include verses ref. 5.20, 5.26, 5.32, 5.115, 5.137, 5.138, 5.147, 5.160, 5.161. The poems upon the theme of loneliness are invariably related to the death of his children or his wife, see ref. 5.32, 5.97, 5.98, 5.137, 5.138.

Poems upon the theme of aging change from those which describe his outward appearance to those which express a general inertia, a negative outlook upon life in general. He sees the mosquito as taking advantage of his age, ref. 5.19, he no longer has the enthusiasm to go far to view the moon, 5.85, his greatest 'treasure' is the little glass bottle that saves him having to get out of bed at night, he holds out no hope for self-improvement in the coming year, 5.127, he doesn't bother to clear the snow from his doorway, 5.152/6, and he confesses that with the first fall of snow the 'spirit of idleness' comes upon him, 5.120. We can sense in these verses the sapping of his creative energy and that one of its basic causes was his settled life in Kashiwabara, see ref. 5.153.

Poems about small creatures can also be found in great numbers and some of his most famous poems upon this theme are found during this period. Particularly verses ref. 5.16 and 5.80 are known to almost every adult and child in Japan today. As in the Nanaban Nikki most of his verses about insects and small creatures reveal affection and

and empathy combined with a keen sense of observation.

For examples see mosquitoes ref.5.19, 5.131,5.149 and 5.78, flies ref. 5.20, 5.22, 5.79, 5.80 and 5.159, ants ref. 5.30, fireflies ref. 5.28, the horse ref. 5.32, grasshopper ref.5.37, fleas ref. 5.54, and 5.55, deer ref. 5.61, geese ref. 5.100, spiders ref. 5.109, fishes 5.113, swallows ref. 5.136, sparrows ref. 5.144, frogs ref. crows ref. 5.162 etc.

As in the Nanaban Nikki poems of a cynical nature also are recorded in considerable number and many of them express Issa's sense of self-scorn and worthlessness. The willow at his gate dislikes being there! 5.15. He feels himself to be a firefly that does not shine, 5.56. He is surprised that the tree he planted grows, 5.62. He is constantly conscious that he idles his time away while others work, 5.64 and 5.65. and he feels that others curse him for not dying soon enough! 5.121. His view of society in general remains cynical. It is only the young plants that do not prick or sting 5.81, and even the moon is grieved at man and his society, 5.34. His cynical gaze is often turned towards Kashiwabara in particular and Shinano in general. Even the flies in Kashiwabara bite and sting! 5.40, none can laugh or joke when the snow begins to fall 5.50, and when the people are snowed up for winter all there is to eat are dried foods and all there is to do is to talk about others! 5.51 and 5.130. Issa also continued to poke fun at those in authority and religious dignitaries, he calls for the lowly sparrows to get out of the way of the local lord's horse, 5.16, every-one must get down on their knees even

though they are enjoying the cherry-blossoms or even though it's only the local lord's ice that is being carried by! 5.103 and 5.112, it takes two samurai to take the master's dog for a walk 5.60, Buddha receives money and flowers for doing nothing and pretends to be born again every year in order to be offered more money! 5.18 and 5.158 and two flies are seen coupling on the shaven, bald head of the chief priest! 5.159.

In contrast we find that Issa's sympathy is always with the poverty stricken and the poorer classes. Even though during this period Issa was not a poor man himself, his poetry continued to be full of verses about the very poor. We find reference to the cheap harlot's house in the winter cold 5.41, the blind masseur out in the snow without a customer 5.42, the dumb beggar and child by the wayside 5.43, the samurai's servant hurrying in the cold 5.46, the homeless mother keeping the frost from the sleeping child 5.74, the young harlot with no charcoal with which to heat her food 5.90, the 'rag and bone' man's house with no decorations at New Year 5.89, those in debt 5.123, the serving girl from the mansion buying a morsel to eat 4.142, and the thin soles of the serving man's straw sandals 5.155.

Issa continued to be a keen observer of the lives of ordinary people and his poetry in this sphere, while not progressing to further maturity or new development takes on the flavour of life in Shinano. He notices the pots and pans out to dry as the thaw begins 5.5, the children playing as the snow thaws 5.10, the winnowing fan 5.37, people's dislike of snow and its effect upon their lives

5.50, 5.51, 5.71, 5.120 and 5.130, snow falling in the hot water of the outside bath, the pile of chopsticks outside the buckwheat noodle shop 5.135 (buckwheat is a major Shinano crop), and the timbers creaking with the cold 5.141. Issa's farming background and continuing rejection of conventional poetic concepts are seen in verses ref. 5.12 and 5.81 where he sees the falling cherry blossoms as 'manure' for the mountain fields too far from the farmer's home, the source of 'night soil', and the chrysanthemum as an ingredient for his soup (chrysanthemum leaves are a traditional ingredient of soup in Japan). Verse 5.117 is similar in concept.

Even in the area of method of expression and word usage there is no further development beyond the previous period. All his techniques of syllable repetition, onomatopoeia, personification, colloquial and vernacular words and phrases, the use of ora and ore, zo and zo yo etc. are all found during this period but nothing new is added, there is no pioneering of new ground. Parody upon the classics and the use of words and phrases from Japan's literary heritage are almost non-existent during this period and this is further evidence that Issa's poetry had lost the energy and creativeness that it previously had.

Although one cannot escape the conclusion that Issa had passed the peak of his development as a poet by the end of the period covered by the Nanaban Nikki, this is not to deny that there are not a number of fine haiku verses in the Hachiban Nikki and Bunsei Kuchō, among

which would be included the daylight moon over Mount Asama 5.3, the thief in the moonlight 5.2, sunset over Matsushima 5.6, the red ribbon in the pile of dust 5.9, the line of ants and the towering clouds 5.30, the compass aligned with the mountains of home 5.38, the sermon seen through the mist 5.102, the fish returned to the well in the light of the moon 5.113, the rays of the sun setting behind the mountains seen shining upon the hearth 5.124, the light of the lamp in the freezing cold 5.124, and the sound of the moorhen and the temple bell 5.151. These are all fine descriptive haiku which reveal to us that while his creativity waned, his keen sense of observation was with Issa until the last.

In only two areas did Issa's poetry show any further development. These are his verses about children and verses in which his personal religious conclusions are expressed. Only these two areas of his poetry in this period will be discussed here in more detail.

(ii). Issa's Verses About Children.

The development we can trace in his work during this period is one of depth of expression. This is brought about by outward circumstances rather than inward inspiration on Issa's part. The birth and death of his own children after a life of over thirty-five years as a homeless wanderer provided Issa with the stimulation to write verses of both joy and pathos about children, which in their private and personal expression of joy and grief are without parallel in Japanese literature in their simple honesty and reality of expression.

Issa continued to write poetry about children in general in this period but his verses are no improvement upon those of the previous period. See verses ref. 5.4, 5.10, 5.59, and 5.129. All are delightful verses about children while the following are about step-children in the same vein as the previous period, ref. 5.101, 5.125 and 5.162.

However, when we look at Issa's verses about his own children we find clear and vivid expressions of a father's joy and sorrow.

Verse ref. 5.1, when read with the account of Issa rejoicing over his little girl, is such a clear and vivid picture of paternal joy and hope, written in such a way that one can imagine clearly the little girl for oneself, with Issa sitting close by simply rejoicing in the sight of her, it is unique in the reality of the scene it depicts. It is a verse with which every parent can readily and easily identify.

It is, however, upon her death that Issa wrote what is perhaps his most famous verse;

Tsuyu no yo ya tsuyu no yo nagara sari nagara.

This world is dew

A world of dew

And yet and yet.....

How perfectly this verse expresses the dilemma of one who grieves over the sudden death of a healthy little child. Though written by one brought up in a Buddhist culture and couched in Buddhist terms, the sentiment of this verse is so universal that it can easily be understood by anyone and yet it asks a question of such depth in such a unique way that it is numbered among the greatest haiku verses ever

written. Issa, as a Buddhist, knew the teaching that all living things are like the dew, ephemeral and transient, he knew that he should resign himself to her death as part of the never ending cycle of birth - death- rebirth, he knew that he should not 'love' her to the extent that he did, for this was the cause of his grief, his attachment to transient things. He knew all this and yet he could not reconcile himself to the fact that she had gone, he could not forget, and within his heart the question echoed constantly, "But why? why her? why?" and there was no answer. All this and more is included in this remarkable little verse, which although modelled upon a previous verse⁵¹ is filled with even deeper meaning when placed in the context of his grief at the death of his little girl.

Other verses which are vivid expressions of questioning and grief at the death of his children include those ref. 5.39 Where he sees his little girl in his dreams, 5.75 in which he continues to ask the question, "Why?" with regard to her death, 5.75 in which he sees the face of his dead son Ishitaro through his tears, and verses 5.95, 5.97 and 5.98 which are all powerful expressions of personal grief. Others had written verses upon the death of their children and some are recorded by Issa in 'Ora ga Haru' but they have an obliqueness about them and are restrained in the expression of grief they contain. In comparison, Issa's verses are direct and filled with explicit expressions of personal sorrow.

(ii). The Clear Expression of Issa's Religious Conclusions
In this Period.

As in the previous period, Issa's poetry contains verses upon the thought of death in a religious context, see verses 5.164 and 5.165 and the thought of heavenly bliss and future punishment, see verses 5.88 and 5.166. There are also verses which continue to reveal that Issa's view of nature and life was based upon the concepts of Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism, see verses 5.35 and 5.68.

It is in the first and last chapters of the work 'Ora ga Haru' that we find the clearest expressions of his personal faith in Amida Buddha, the saviour figure of Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism. The first chapter includes this expression of his faith;

I will leave it all to Buddha, and though the path
 ahead be difficult and steep, like a snow covered
 road winding through the mountains, I welcome the
 New Year - even as I am.

Only
 Moderately happy
 In my spring 52
 My New Year.

It should be noted that the phrase Issa uses in his prose translated 'leave it all to Buddha' is the 'anata makase' of Jōdō Shinshū and does not refer to Buddha in general, but to the saviour figure of Jōdo Shinshū, Amida Buddha.⁵³ Also in the same passage, translated 'winding', is the phrase magari nari ni, which we have seen to mean 'in one's natural state' or 'just as you are'. Consequently the verse would be better translated;

5.177. Medetasa mo chū gurai nari ora ga haru.

My happiness, too, lies in this,
 I am what I am,
 Nothing more, nothing less,
 In this my spring, my New Year.

In the final chapter of 'Ora ga Haru' we find he concludes this work with a yet clearer religious statement. Issa declares that as far as he is concerned,

"...place our reliance neither on faith nor on personal virtue, but surrender ourselves completely to the will of Buddha. Let him do what He will with us - be it to carry us to heaven, or to hell. Herein lies the secret.....
..... we need not always be saying our prayers with hollow voice, for we shall be entirely under the benevolent direction of Buddha.
This is salvation - this is the peace of mind we teach in our religion. Blessed be the name of Buddha .

Trusting to Buddha
Good and bad,
I bid farewell 54
To the departing year."

It should be noted that here, too, all reference to Buddha is to Amida Buddha and the last verse contains the familiar phrase anata makase . On the first day of the following year Issa recorded the verse ref. 5.93.

As the infirmities of age crept upon him, intensified by sickness and increasingly more (delibating,) Issa's philosophy of life found increasing expression in the vocabulary of the faith he had learned from his father.

It did not completely deliver him from fear of the future, as the last verse in the selection from Bunsei Kuchō reveals, see verse ref.5.166, but it provided him with a religious basis that sustained him during his final years in which he knew so much personal grief.

His clearer expression of his religious faith thus became one of the two further developments in his poetry in a period that in every other aspect was one of re-statement and inertia in terms of the development of his style.

Appendix to Chapter Two.

An Introduction to Issa's Work 'Ora ga Haru' and a Short
Critical Assessment of the English Translation of this
Work by Nobuyuki Yuasa, 'The Year of My Life'.

Introduction.

'Ora ga Haru' has become Issa's most well known work. It was written in the year 1819 when Issa was fifty-six years old and is a theoretical account of that year, though it contains within it the main event in Issa's life in 1819, the death of his daughter Sato. It is in the haibun or kubun style, short prose pieces being followed by a verse or verses which are appropriate to the topic of the prose piece or which relate to the season in which the prose piece is depicted as taking place.

55

A copy of this work was first made in 1852, twenty-five years after Issa's death, and printed and distributed at personal cost locally in Shinano province, mainly among those who knew and recognised Issa as a representative poet of that region. This edition fell into the hands of a publisher in the book centre of Edo, the Kanda district, and was published in 1854 and later in 1878. It was the first work of Issa's to become widely known in Japan.

56

The title of this work was given by the man who first copied the original and printed it in 1852, Shirai Kazuyuki. The title phrase is taken from the last line of the first poem in the book.

57

'Ora ga Haru' is a composite work. It contains 231 poems by Issa and 40 by other poets. However, of the

231 verses by Issa only 31 are found only in this work. 200 of them are found in identical form, or with slight changes in either the Nanaban Nikki or the first year of the Hachiban Nikki or both.⁵⁸ Issa has woven these verses, plus the 31 verses not found elsewhere into a largely theoretical year which represents his life as a whole. It is doubtful, however, if this was his original intention. Rather it is thought that at the beginning of 1819, the year this work purports to cover, as his daughter Sato entered her second year, he set out to write about this his happiest year so far and gathered material from his previous collections which would recall his own unhappy childhood, children in general and the little girl Sato in particular,⁵⁹ but the sad death of Sato in June of ~~that~~ year turned this work into an account of her birth, life and death in the context of Issa's own experience and resultant philosophy of life.

It contains all the distinctive elements of Issa's mature style, realism and a starkly honest revelation of his feelings in an easily understood poetic style, love for the small and weak creatures and children, his step-child complex, humour and the clearest expression of the religious philosophy of life he had arrived at, to be found in any of his work. It is for this reason that it so quickly became the first of his works to be widely recognised. It is truly representative of his work as a whole.

The prose pieces are a mixture of reportage, fiction, borrowing from other works, reminiscences of his own

past and statements about his religious conclusions. The two unifying themes in this work are children and the Buddhist philosophy of life and death.

A very brief outline of this work would be as follows;

Chapter One.

This chapter sets the tone for the religious philosophy that by this time Issa had come to take as his own philosophy of life. He contrasts his own philosophy with that of the more conventional practice of Buddhism. The prose section begins with a legendary story found in the Konjaku Monogatari, a collection of Buddhist legends of the late Heian period. To this section Issa adds his own religious philosophy. The inclusion of the verse about his little girl, ref.5.1, reveals that she is the joy of his life and that it is upon seeing her healthy and happy as she enters her second year of life that Issa himself finds his own happiness. This chapter takes us into the middle of February.

Chapter Two.

This chapter is actual reportage of an unfortunate incident that took place in Kashiwabara at that time. Issa uses this incident to introduce his comments on the intransience of life, an intransience that includes all living things;

"Surely the flowers too- no less Takamaru's parents- must weep to be cut down and cast into the flames in the course of a single day, just as they were lifting their faces to the spring after a long winters snow. For flowers too have life and will not they, as well as we, pass to Nirvana in the end?" ⁶⁰

This passage clearly expresses Issa's almost animistic view of all living things and why he was so fond of

them, especially the small and weak.

Chapter Three.

The idea of heavenly maidens descending is a common one in Buddhist legend. It is recorded that when the emperor Tenmu, who ascended throne in 672, played his harp in the palace in the old capital of Yoshino, heavenly maidens descended from heaven and danced.⁶¹

Issa skillfully uses this introduction based upon such legend to introduce the coming of springtime, for it is followed by a poem which depicts birds singing among the plum blossoms as the only 'heavenly voices' to be heard. The seasonal sequence is not strictly adhered to here, for summer verses are also included.

Chapter Four.

It is a matter of some doubt whether Issa actually set out upon a journey at this time for there is no record of such in his journal.⁶² Whether this is a record of an actual attempt at a journey or not, the account is used to introduce the topic of poetic travel which had been such an important element in Issa's own life that the 'year' would be incomplete without its inclusion. The verses which follow include those which express his longing for his own home-town, Kashiwabara, a longing which is an essential part of the traveller's heart. It does, however, also include verses which reveal Issa's critical spirit towards Kashiwabara, a critical and cynical spirit that had been born in him by the poor reception he had often received there. By the end of this chapter Issa is in

the summer of his year.

Chapter Five.

This chapter is actual reportage and introduces the subject of humour Nabuchi, a friend of Issa's lived in the town of Naganuma about ten miles south of Kashiwabara.

Chapter Six.

A prose piece on one of Issa's favourite creatures, the frog. It is followed by some verses on frogs and other summer subjects.

Chapter Seven.

The place name in the prose passage, Susaka, is the name of a village in Shinano province. This prose passage is likely based on rumour. This somewhat lurid episode is used to introduce Issa's basic belief about the sanctity of life;

"All creatures, not excluding even the fleas and lice, are endowed with life. It is just as dear to one as to another, and it is a grave sin to kill any living thing, particularly in the act of procreation." ⁶³

This passage gives a clear expression of the basic Buddhist concept of the sanctity of life which underlies Issa's poetry about and love for small and weak creatures. It explains clearly one of the basic reasons why his work expanded to include those forms of insect life normally excluded from Japanese poetry.

The prose passage is followed by a variety of typical poems by Issa in which insects and small creatures are the major subjects.

Chapter Eight.

This prose passage is based on actual experience and is skillfully used to introduce the fact that Issa was a step-child for most of his life. Note, too, that by this time Issa has placed this misfortune, too, within the framework of his Buddhist philosophy of life.

"According to Buddha's teaching there is a reason for everything that happens. If that be true, my suffering cannot be undeserved and I may well have brought it upon my own head".⁶⁴

Chapter Nine.

Here the step-child theme continues. The prose passage and verse are found in the fourth volume of a work called 'Fukuro Soshi', a classic work of the late 12th. century. In this work the prose and poem are anonymous. They were later attributed to the daughter of Ki Tsurayuki. Ki Tsurayuki (884-946) was one of the greatest poets in the history of Japanese poetry. (Jap. Court Poetry p.3).

Chapter Ten.

Another short chapter on the theme of the step-child. Issa reminisces about his own childhood and how unhappy it was because he was a step-child. It is most likely that he wrote this verse at this time and not as it is attributed here, i.e. at six years of age!⁶⁵

Chapter Eleven.

This, too, is a short chapter on the step-child theme, but this time emphasizing the cruelty of the step-mother.

Chapter Twelve.

Chapters 8, 9, 10 and 11 lead up to and

contrast with this chapter in which he relates the happy birth and life of his daughter Sato. This is the longest chapter in the work and is obviously central to its composition. It introduces various other verses about children.

Chapter Thirteen.

This chapter describes the relationship between mother and child as Issa thought it should be, e.g.

"If there is anything in the world which might soften the heart of an unfeeling man it is the true affection a mother feels for her child. According to Buddha's teaching man and beast are one in their essential nature. If that be true, then the mutual love between a child and his parent must be the same for animals as for men, and there can be no difference between them." 66

Issa here is comparing the true affection of a mother and child to that of the step-mother and child. His conclusion, with an appeal to the teaching of Buddha, is that the lack of love that his step-mother showed towards him puts her on a level lower than the beasts.

Chapter Fourteen.

This chapter is another major and central chapter in this work. Sato dies shortly after her first birthday. This is the actual reportage by Issa of his own feelings at this time, as was chapter twelve with regard to Sato's birth. The religious interpretation of the verse which directly follows the main prose passage has already been dealt with.

Chapter Fifteen.

This chapter describes a mother's grief and loneliness at the loss of a child by using examples from the world of nature.

Chapter Sixteen.

Here the theme of autumn is introduced. From this point on Issa begins the conclusion of this work. He relates his negative feelings about his native region.

Chapter Seventeen.

There is no prose with this chapter. The verses, though including summer poems, are mainly those which give a strong impression of the loneliness of autumn, 'echoes from dead trees', 'cold winds', 'autumn winds' etc.

The chapter concludes with verses written to commemorate the thirtieth day after the death of Sato.

Chapter Eighteen.

This very short chapter mentions the autumn theme of falling chestnuts. The Suwa shrine is in Kashiwabara.

Chapter Nineteen.

The theme of the lonely parents is introduced here.

Chapter Twenty.

The cycle of the full year draws to an end. New Year celebrations begin, but they are disappointing for Issa.

Chapter Twenty-one.

Issa concludes the year with a restatement of his religious philosophy of life, and 'The Year of My Life' ends on the 29th. of December 1819.

A Short Critical Assessment of The Work "The Year of My Life".

This work is divided into two parts, a brief introduction to Issa's life and work followed by a translation from Japanese to English of the work 'Ora ga Haru'.

The brief outline of Issa's life can be questioned in one or two minor points. On page two, Yuasa states that Issa was sent to the house of Rokuzaemon Nakamura to learn reading and writing. This statement is not historically proveable. It is highly probable that Issa did learn to read and write in this way but it is not yet established fact. On page five Yuasa states;

"His third journey led him across the mountains of central Japan to the coast of the Sea of Japan. He left Edo in March 1799 and returned in November the same year, but the details of his itinerary are unknown".

The chronology of his life in the 'bekkan' volume of the 'Complete Works of Issa' states that he set out in March with the intention of travelling over the mountains to the Japan sea coast but had returned to Edo by the beginning of May the same year, having seemingly abandoned his plan.

67

On pages six and seven Yuasa gives the reasons for Issa's travels. He states;

"For Issa, on the contrary, the road was a link which bound him more closely to other human beings".....
It is characteristic of him that while on the road he should constantly be seeking a friend with whom to pass the night".

While this somewhat romantic view of Issa's reason for travel might be true of his first great journey into western Japan it is only partly true of the remainder

of his time until he returned to live in Kashiwabara. Issa needed to travel in order to eat and at times it was more likely this, rather than any 'poetic discipline', that forced him onto the road and into Shimosa and Kasuza.

In comparing Issa's style to the standards set by Bashō for haiku verse I feel that Yuasa has come to the right conclusions. I.e.

Page 25. "These poets indulged in vulgar language for its own sake and with the intent to amuse, whereas Issa is essentially serious in spite of his colloquialism".

Page 27 "We must not, however, identify Issa's 'subjectivity' with the kind of personal and extraneous intrusion of the self practiced by the poets of the pre-Bashō period. They were simply interested in the monarch of their own wit, but Issa loved the objects he saw around him, no less than himself in the object".

Page 29. "But such contrasts and such mixtures in no way violate Bashō's fundamental principle. If anything they imply a more complex and vivid harmony. Issa's mixed style brings us, by way of conflict, to that unity that is Issa just as surely as the purer and more single-toned harmonies of Bashō..."

Only on the third point do I feel that Yuasa does not pay sufficient attention to those factors which produced in Issa and his poetry the stark contrasts it contains and which can only be unified in that they are the products of his complicated and contradictory personality. Issa's personality was molded through the experiences of a desperately unhappy childhood, a hard and unsheltered life as a youth, discrimination and poverty in Edo, extreme loneliness, rejection by what family he had, and finally, much personal grief. As for the literary influences of the Edo haiku scene and Edo culture in general upon Issa's work, Yuasa says nothing.

As for the translation itself there are two general remarks I would like to make. The first concerns the reasons given for choosing a four line form, on page 32. It would seem to me that if a verse can be adequately translated in three lines then three lines should be used. If a verse cannot be translated adequately in four lines, then use five. The nature of haiku poetry is such that surely it is unwise to confine oneself to a particular form in English when translating. Also I think it is a great pity that Yuasa did not give at least the rōmaji Japanese rendering of each poem, so that the reader who does understand Japanese sufficiently can quickly make his own judgement upon the English and use the English translation for a fuller understanding of the poem in Japanese..

Yuasa also states that he has not added many footnotes "for fear they might break the coherence of the work and destroy its unity of effect".⁶⁸ However, unless this work is intended for Japanese who read English, more footnotes are necessary in order to make it more comprehensible to the non-Japanese reader. For example;

Page 38 "The words 'crane' and 'tortoise' ring hollow in my ear".

Without the explanation that 'crane' and 'tortoise' are emblems of long life and happiness in Japan the sentence means little to the Western reader.

Page 91. "Take this and offer it to the stone statue

that stands beside the road."

Here the reference is to jizo, the Buddhist god of travelers, mothers and children. An explanation of this would certainly be an aid to understanding the passage.

Page 103. "In our joy we made a boat of fresh straw, and pouring hot wine ceremoniously over it, sent it down the river with the god of smallpox on it."

An explanation of this Shinto practice would make the passage more meaningful to the non-Japanese reader. The circular straw lid of a rice sack was taken, and hot water containing rice-wine was sprinkled over it from two small bamboo sprigs which were then used to hang Shinto paper emblems ^{on} onto the lid. A small offering of food was then placed upon it and it was floated down the river. This was the Shinto ceremony for the banishment of disease. (Comp. Works vol.6 p.172).

Such examples can also be found in the poems in this work, i.e. the sleeping Buddha in the poems on page 42, pouring tea over Buddha, page 53, the issue of the sedge hat, page 57, the mosquito larva that ascended to the sky page 60, the reason for the boy practising writing on his face on a hot day page 64, 'the face of a monstrous ghost' page 96, and 'My son's banner' page 100. All these points really need some explanation for the general non-Japanese reader who has no, or little knowledge of Japanese culture. He would need to know that, there is a Buddhist image in reclining form, that all field workers, especially ladies, used wide-rimmed sedge hats to keep the sun off their skin since a deep tan is not a mark of beauty in Japan, that it

is not the larva but the newborn mosquito that has just emerged that has flown up into the sky, that inky fingers had wiped sweating brows and that thus stained it made no difference if one wrote on an already inkstained face and that the inkladen brush was cool to the skin on a summer's day, that the child was mimicking the flying squirrel and trying to frighten his friends, that the 'banner' refers to the koi nobori carp streamers in celebration of the birth and growth of boys, etc. I feel that Yuasa assumes too much prior knowledge on behalf of the Western reader. Without some explanation many of his phrases would be very puzzling to the average Western reader.

It is, however, with Yuasa's translations that I find most fault. At times they are very free indeed, and this will be obvious to the reader of Japanese when placed alongside the Japanese text. Here are some examples;

Page 40. Sakura sakura to utawareshi oi ki kana.

So famous
And so beloved
Was this cherry tree
When it was young.

Compare verse ref. 5.17.

Page 41. Mugura kara anna kochō no umarekeri.

Forth
From the bush
Beautiful and bright-
A butterfly!

Rather; Ah! That such a beautiful
Little butterfly
Should be born
Among the goose grass.

Page 41. Shirokabe no soshire nagara kasumi keru.

Above curses
The rich white walls
Sit at their ease
In the misty air.

Rather; Cursed from below
The white storehouse walls
Of the rich upon the hill
In the misty air.

Page 46. Tōrinuke se yo to kaki kara yanagi kana.
 The soft willow
 Yielding as a woman
 Invites me to pass
 Through the hedge.

Rather; Through here,
 Pass through here,
 Beckons the willow
 From the hedge.

One gets the impression that Yuasa has inserted his
 second line in order to make up four lines to his poem.

Page 53. Naga no hi o kawaku ma mo nashi tanjo hotoke.
 Person after person
 Pours sweet tea
 Over the Buddha newborn
 This long April day.

Rather; Long the day
 But not dry even for one moment
 The image of Buddha
 On Buddha's birthday.

NB. On the 8th. of April worshippers pour sweet tea over
 the image of Buddha to celebrate his birthday.

Page 56. Yo ga yokuba mo hitotsu tomare meshi no hae.
 Come flies!
 Have some rice!
 May you, too,
 Enjoy a rich harvest.

It is true that Yuasa has included in his verse the meaning of
 the line from the popular song about an abundant harvest,
 see Comp. Works. vol. 6 p.167, but even so verse ref.
 5.20 seems to be closer to the Japanese in the verse.
 The word meshi should hardly be translated 'rice' in
 this verse.

Page 60. Shiba deshita yasumi tokoro ya natsu kodachi.
 In summer
 A single patch of lawn-
 A spot of shade-
 Becomes a shelter.

Rather; A patch of grass
 Becomes a place to rest
 Beneath a grove
 Of summer trees.

Page 65 Obotaru yurari yurari to tōri kerī.
 Hither and thither
 Dancing slowly
 A big firefly
 Swings by.

Rather; see verse ref. 5.28.

Page 78 Uo domo ya oke to mo shirade kado suzumi.
 Hopelessly captive
 In a tub
 The fish delight in
 Cool water.

Rather; see verse 4.301.

Page.81 Kaiwai no namakedokoro ya koshita yami.
 This dark space
 Under the thick leaves,
 Belongs no doubt
 To our idle neighbors.

Rather; This dark and shady place
 Beneath the leafy trees,
 A place to laze away the time
 For those of this community!

Page 98 Wanpaku ya shibarenagara yobu hotaru.
 Tied to a tree
 In deep disgrace
 The child calls out
 To a firefly.

Rather; see verse ref. 4.323.

Page 112. Hitonatsuki tori yo dotchira ni ya ga ataru.
 Behold, two cranes
 Eating side by side
 One of you is certain
 To be shot dead.

Rather; Two friendly cranes
 Standing together
 The arrow will pierce
 One or the other.

The above are examples of Yuasa's translations and how I think they can be improved. The translation of haiku verse is not an easy task, however, for often the area of interpretation is wide and not clearly defined. I feel, however, that as far as possible one should be as true to the words of the original as clarity of meaning will allow. Yuasa seems to drift far from

the original, much farther than is necessary for the sake of clarity of meaning, in my opinion. The following verse, however, is an example of faithfulness to the original word usage at the expense of clarity of meaning;

Page 39. Hae warae futatsu ni naru zo kesa kara wa.

Crawl, laugh,
Do as you wish-
For you are two years old
This morning.

Surely the following is nearer to what the original means to the western reader;

Laugh and crawl
Into this your second year
From this morning!

The above are but a selection of examples that illustrate a general trend in Yuasa's work.

NOTES ON CHAPTER TWO.. Section 5.

1. Comp.Works vol.4. p.6.
2. Written in celebration of the fact that his daughter Sato had entered her second year.
3. Mount Asama is a volcanic mountain near the town of Karuizawa in Nagano prefecture.
4. The motoyui was a thin paper hair ribbon used by children and young girls. They were usually black or white but also sometimes red in colour.
5. Sakura sakura are the beginning words of one of Japan's most popular songs about cherry blossom.
6. Written upon losing sight of his travelling companion.
7. Written upon seeing a dream of his little girl Sato who had died shortly before.
8. When the blind masseur was in the area of a customer who had called for him, he would announce his presence so that someone could come from the house and lead him. In this poem the masseur has no customers but is still calling out in the hope that someone will hire him.
9. The Mountains of Kazusa district in which Issa spent much of his time using Edo as a base. Now part of Chiba prefecture.
10. Written upon seeing a beggar in the temple grounds.
11. Jinko mo takazu he mo herazu , is a common proverbial saying which means, "Though he has few merits neither does he have many faults."
12. The word kissho is made up of two characters, the character for 'felicitations' and the character for 'writing'. It is used to describe one's first calligraphy of the New Year. Each member of the household would write a few characters on New Year's Day. For the children this was a chore rather than a pleasure and so they were promised tangerines for their efforts.
13. The pomegranate has never been a popular fruit in Japan because its flesh is thought to look like an open wound.

14. 'Higan' is the word used for the equinoctial week during which special Buddhist services are held.
15. This verse is based upon the main character of the famous Japanese novel 'The Tale of Genji', Hikaru Genji. Hikaru means 'to shine'. The commonest kind of firefly in Japan is known as the Genji hotaru because it glows white. Hikaru Genji had an illustrious career. Issa compares his own life, the life of one who has 'shone' at nothing.
16. Women carried coins and small articles in the long pocket-like sleeves of their kimono. Issa is possibly describing a woman of the streets who has just finished with a customer.
17. This verse was written to celebrate the completion of the building of a new house of a friend. The fact that the paste on the ~~paper~~ lantern has not yet dried indicates just how new the house is and that it had only just been completed on schedule.
18. Ishitaro was the name of Issa's third child.
19. Written after the death of Ishitaro who died on the 11th. of Jan., a time when the large flat rice cakes offered in celebration of the New Year were still displayed in the house.
20. Written in grief upon remembering his dead child Ishitaro.
21. Suma is a place name. A very famous beauty spot on the coast just west of Kobe.
22. Issa sees the flies movements as acts of prayer.
23. Myōsen temple was the local temple in which Issa's family records were kept.
24. Comp.Works. vol.5 p.137.
25. In Japanese folklore the fox is well known for its ability to change its form.
26. Mida Buddha is the shortened form of Amida Buddha.
27. The crane and the turtle are traditional emblems of blessing and long life.
28. This quote is from the Analects of Confucius.
29. Sentaro and Sato.

30. Issa here refers to the once common practice of carrying young children strapped to the back, a very convenient method for a busy mother as it leaves both hands free. It is dangerous for very young children because in deep sleep upon their mothers' backs unable to support their own heads' the air passage can become blocked without the mother knowing it.
31. Comp.Works. vol 4. p.16.
32. " " p.573 - 583.
33. Issa is in error here. The Buddha found his enlightenment at thirty-five years of age. Comp.Works vol.4 p.33.
34. The word manroku is a pun. Its general meaning is 'satisfaction', but Issa is also using it to mean 'sixty complete years'.
35. The word shingara is provincial dialect. Its meaning is explained in Issa's own work 'Hogen Zasshu'. Comp. Works vol.7 p.554.
36. The verse refers to the command for commoners to pay obeisance to those in authority.
37. In the old calendar the 5th. of May, the day this verse was written, was known as yakujitsu i.e. 'medicine day'.
38. Another verse based upon the command for obeisance from commoners. This time only the lord's ice is being carried by!
39. Issa is most likely referring here to the 'Obon' dance which is held annually in each district at a time when most people try to be in their own towns and villages to honour the souls of dead ancestors. Not being a permanent resident anywhere for most of his life and not being very popular in his own town it is likely that he never attended this time of community rejoicing.
40. The Tatsuya river was famous for the red maple leaves which floated in it when blown from the maple trees which lined its banks.
41. Because it saves him leaving his bed to visit the toilet which was in an out-house.

- 42.. In his haste and disrespect the debt-collector has entered the house with his feet still shod, an act of great discourtesy.
43. Hida mountain is in Gifu prefecture.
44. The 'toshidama' is a traditional gift of money given to children at New Year. Japanese children look forward to receiving it in the same way that Western children look forward to Christmas presents.
45. In Issa's time the chopsticks used at a noodle shop were washed and reused, unlike today when they are thrown away. After being washed they were placed carefully in stacks to dry outside the shop in the sunshine..
46. A poor serving man, tired out, is snatching a rest under the shade of the cherry blossoms. Issa notices that the soles of his straw sandals have worn very thin.
47. A small village less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the north of Kashiwabara..
48. Mountain on the border of Shinano and Echigo, just over 2000 metres high. It overshadows the village of Kashiwabara.
49. This is an extremely difficult verse to translate because the word chichi koishiku translated as 'yearning for the breast', which is its literal meaning, is also used as onomatopoeia for the sound that the minomushi (basket worm) makes. The word minomushi itself may well be a pun on the word mi meaning 'oneself' and mushi meaning 'feeling' Issa could also be alluding to the word nakimushi meaning 'crybaby'. I have translated the verse as it applies to the child's circumstances but in doing so the puns are lost.
The phrase chichikoishi is found in the 'Makura Soshi' as an adjective for the noun minomushi and is used as a pun in the same way. Issa is almost certainly alluding to this. Comp.Works vol.5 p.146

50. The Hachiban Nikki and Bunsei Kuchō which cover a period of seven years contain almost 7000 verses.
51. See verse ref. 4.360. This verse was originally composed to commemorate the death of Issa's first child. See Comp.Works. vol.3 p.478.
52. The Year of My Life. p.38.
53. Comp. Works vol.6.p.166.
54. The Year of My Life. p.139/140.
55. Comp.Works. vol.6. p.134.
56. Ito p.3.
57. Comp.Works vol,6 p.134.
58. Buson;Issa, Nihonbungaku Kenkyushiryō Sōsho. p.294/5.
59. Ibid. p.297/8.
60. The Year of my Life.,p.45.
61. Kobayashi Issa Shū. Ito Masao. Asahi Shinbunsha 1954. p.271.
62. Comp.Works. Bekkan p.40.
63. The Year of My Life. p.78.
64. Ibid. p.86.
65. Maruyama p.13.
66. The Year of My Life. p.100.
67. Bekkan p. 22.
68. The Year of My Life. p.32.

CHAPTER THREE

A HISTORY OF THE STUDY OF ISSA IN JAPAN.

Sources.

Three sources have been used as a basis for this chapter, they are;

1. Pages 3 to 20 of Kobayashi Issa by Ito Masao, 1942, which form a chapter entitled "Issa Kenkyū no Rekishi" (The History of the Study of Issa).
 2. Pages 45 to 55 of the September issue of the magazine Kokubungaku:Kaishaku to Kanshō which is an article entitled "Issa Kenkyū Shi" by Ozawa Yoshio.
 3. Pages 306 to 311 of Buson:Issa, Nihonbungakukenyū-shiryōsoshō, 1976, which is an article entitled "Kenkyū Shi" by Yamashita Kazumi.
- 1)and 2)are histories of the study of Issa. 3)is a history of the study of both Issa and Buson.

Introduction.

Today, Issa is numbered among the three greatest haiku poets of the Edo period (1603-1867). It is upon the framework of the lives and poetry of Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694), Yosa Buson (1716-1783) and Kobayashi Issa (1763-1827) that the history and development of Edo haiku is commonly constructed in present times.¹ This is, however, a relatively recent development.²

Bashō's reputation as a poet was firmly established in his own lifetime and the study of his poetry began immediately after his death and has continued ever since.³ His poetry was critically assessed and well understood early

on in the 18th century. In contrast, the work of Buson and Issa was not studied in any depth until long after they had died. This fact is not confined to Buson and Issa for it is true of all other Edo period haiku poets with the exception of Bashō.⁴

The serious study of Edo haiku did not begin until the Meiji period (1866-1912).⁵ In the final few years of the 19th. century a twenty-four volume work on Edo haiku was published. In this work Bashō was accorded one complete volume, as were also the poets Kikaku, Ransetsu, Shikō, and Ryōta, but Buson shared a volume with Gyōdai, and Issa one with Ōemaru. At this time Buson and Issa were not considered representative poets of the Edo period.⁶

The history of the study of Issa can be divided into four natural periods. They are;

1. From his death in 1823 until 1890, in which the study of Issa was confined to that of local poets in Shinano.
2. From 1891 until 1910, during which time the serious study of Edo haiku, on a national scale, began.
3. From 1911 until 1945, during which time Issa became firmly established as one of Japan's greatest haiku poets.
4. From 1945 until the present day (1984), during which time a balanced and well informed interpretation of Issa and his poetry has emerged.

The study of Issa and his poetry will be traced through these periods.

1. 1827-1890.

Immediately upon Issa's death, his friend and fellow poet, Nishihara Fumitora, printed a small commemorative volume entitled Issa Ō Shūenki.⁷ It contains eleven of Issa's verses interspersed among short prose passages from Issa's works. It is based upon the format of a small volume printed in commemoration of Bashō, the Bashō Ō Shūenki, and contains prose and verses taken from Kansei Sannen Kikō, Shidara, and Bunsei Kuchō. Nishihara was an oil merchant of the town of Toyono, some fifteen kilometres south of Kashiwabara. His work was known only to local poets.⁸

In 1829 a group of poets in Shinano, who recognised Issa as a master poet, published in Zenkōji, a collection of Issa's poetry containing 521 verses, under the title Issa Hokkushū. In 1848 this volume was revised and reprinted under the editorship of Imai Bokuhō, in Zenkōji. The original volume was supplemented by a further 301 verses bringing the total of Issa's verses in print to 822. In the preface of this work the reason for reprinting was given as the fact that the original volume was not widely known.⁹

In 1851 Hachiban Nikki was copied by Kazuma Shinzo of Inariyama town (about 30 kilometers south of Kashiwabara). Issa's original has not been found, consequently this hand written copy is the oldest there is of this work.¹⁰

In 1852 Ora ga Haru was traced from the original by a local poet, Shirai Kazuyuki of Nakano (about fifteen kilometres south east of Kashiwabara). Shirai then printed copies from his tracing. Further copies were made in 1854.¹¹

The existence of these copies of Issa's works was not widely known outside Shinano; they did, however, provide a scanty basis for the study of small portions of Issa's work. Such study was carried out on a purely local scale and out of personal interest rather than in the pursuit of scholarship.¹²

Issa Hokkushū (1848) and Ora ga Haru, printed by Shirai, were important volumes for they were subsequently re-printed towards the end of the century and provided the only basis upon which to evaluate Issa's life and poetry for the remainder of this period.¹³

Nothing new, to present day knowledge, was written about Issa and no new copies or editions of his works were made for the next forty years.¹⁴

2. 1891-1910.

Literary scholars first turned their attention to the work of Buson in the third decade of the Meiji period, and collections of his poetry with critical commentary were published in 1895 and 1896.¹⁵

In the fourth decade of the Meiji period (1900-1910) a group of poets, led by Masaoka Shiki, showed great interest in the poetry of Buson. It was the interest of this group that resulted in the elevation of Buson to his present position in the history of Edo haiku.¹⁶

Buson was first acclaimed a great poet by Shiki and the group of poets he led.¹⁷ Masaoka Shiki was a tanka^{17a} poet but was also considered the best haiku poet of his day.

During his lifetime, with the advent of the Meiji Reform-

ation, the arts of the Western world were being welcomed into Japan and avidly studied by Japanese scholars. Shiki and his fellow poets absorbed the delicate, yet realistic style of the Western poetry introduced into Japan at this time and they found in Buson, with his elegant and delicate brilliance, rather than in Bashō with his more rustic profundity, a Japanese poet whose work was close to the style of the Western poetry they so admired. Consequently more attention was paid to Buson than to Bashō by the leading poets and scholars of this era.¹⁸

The Meiji Reformation also heralded a period of romanticism in the realm of Japanese literature in general and this aspect of Buson's work also was close to the ideals of the young poets of whom Shiki was the leader.¹⁹ Donald Keene in his work World Within Walls, page 343, states,

"It is precisely because Buson's poetry was so exclusively concerned with his own private feelings that it strikes us as being modern. Hagiwara Sakutarō, the greatest modern Japanese poet, was attracted to Buson alone among the haiku poets of the Tokugawa period because of his 'freshness, romanticism, and something akin to Western poetry'".

Before Shiki published his essay Haijin Buson (1896-1899) most Japanese scholars considered Ryōta to have been the outstanding haiku poet of the haiku revival of the Tenmei era (1781-1789).²⁰

It was in this same period (1890-1900) that interest in Issa and his work began in literary circles in Japan. From June 1891 to January 1892 Shiki quoted verses by Issa in several articles on haiku verse, but Issa was not central to his studies.²¹

The first scholars to study Issa and his poetry in any

specialized manner were men by the name of Okano Chiku²² and Senjuan Mikio. Between July and September 1892 Okano Chiju wrote a series of magazine articles about Issa entitled Shigarami Sōshi and Haiwa in which Issa's poetry was compared to that of the poets Tayojo²³ and Atsujin.²⁴ Senjuan Mikio included in his work Haikai Meiyōdan (Sept. 1892) an essay which included a brief biography of Issa and which concluded that one of his major characteristics was the way in which he made use of the colloquial and vernacular in his verses.²⁵

Meanwhile, stimulated by a visit in the spring of 1892 by the nationally recognised scholar Kohira Yukikazu, local poets in Shinano searched for more manuscripts and did much local research into Issa's life. They also met as a group to discuss their findings. It was largely through the efforts of this group that new material for the study of Issa and his poetry became available in Japan.²⁶

Exchange and mutual encouragement between local poets and nationally acclaimed scholars resulted in the publication of Haijin Issa by Miyazawa Yoshiki and Miyazawa Iwataro in 1898, Issa: Oemaru Zenshū by Okano Chiju in 1899, and Issa Haiku Zenshū by Ōtsuka Kōzan in 1903. It was in the preface to the work Haijin Issa that Shiki wrote the essay which included his critical evaluation of Issa as a poet whose three major characteristics were comic humour, light hearted irony, and love for small and weak creatures.²⁷

Haijin Issa is a small work of about 200 pages.²⁸ It contains some glaring errors, for example, Ora ga Haru is

confused with Waga Haru Shū and Issa is reported as having left Kashiwabara at thirty years of age to study haiku under Seibi.²⁹

As well as being the first scholarly attempt to interpret the poetry of Issa, it is also evidence of the paucity of material available to scholars of those days.

During this period the study of Issa was greatly advanced through the work of two local poets, Tsukamatsu Roka and Nakamura Rokurō.³⁰ Tsukamatsu, from April 1901, had printed in the Shinano edition of the Mainichi newspaper, a series of articles entitled Haikaiji Issa, in which he published the results of his research into the life, personality, and poetry of Issa. This series of articles, which included the first ever introduction to Issa's Chichi no Shūen Nikki, and a detailed introduction to Ora ga Haru, was the most extensive and scholarly study of Issa and his poetry that had been published up until that time. However, because it was printed in a provincial newspaper, it was not widely known.³¹

In 1909 Haikaiji Issa was revised in the light of eight further years of research, published in book form, and sold throughout Japan. In this work the realism and seriousness of Issa's poetry was appreciated for the first time. Tsukamatsu recognised Issa as a serious, realistic poet who used humour and irony, rather than just a light-hearted, witty poet.³²

In 1908 Nakamura Rokurō of Kashiwabara held an exhibition, in Nagano city, of Issa's manuscripts, works, and artifacts at which some 300 items were displayed.³³ After this exhibition the "Issa Dōkō Kai" (Friends of Issa Association)

was formed for the purpose of publishing Issa's works.^{33a}
 In 1910 this group published Nanaban Nikki.³⁴ This was the first time this representative work of Issa's had been published and its publication made available to scholars 7000 verses of Issa's poetry written in his most mature period.³⁵ In 1908, Maruyama Kashū, a member of this group published a volume entitled Issa Ichidai Shū which contained the first published text of Chichi no Shūen Nikki.³⁶

The literary world was thus presented with seven times as many verses as had previously been available and the text of Chich no Shūen Nikki, a work which displays clearly some of the major characteristics of Issa's personality.

3. 1910-1945.

Thus it was from the end of the Meiji period (1911) and in the first few years of the Taishō period (Taishō period 1912-1925), that Issa emerged from seclusion in Shinano and became recognised as a haiku poet of unique distinction in the literary world of Japan.³⁷

Apart from a small work entitled Issa Ibokukan published by the "Issa Dōkō Kai", in which a clear and balanced picture of the life of Issa and an evaluation of the unique characteristics of his poetry are given, no new work on Issa was published.³⁸ Scholars were assessing the increasing amount of Issa material that had been discovered and published between 1900 and 1910.

The publication of Nanaban Nikki, Chichi no Shūen Nikki and the reprinting of Haijin Issa came at a time, at the beginning of the Taishō period, when naturalism and realism

became very popular in Japanese literary circles, as the period of romantic idealism which characterized the Meiji era came to an end. Poets who had previously evaluated Buson's work so highly were now in middle age and their work began to be more concerned with the real lives of ordinary people.³⁹ They turned from idealism to realism, from romanticism to the problems of everyday life with its difficulties and uglier aspects. Literary scholars turned their gaze from heroes to the common man, his loneliness, his mundane struggles, his weaknesses and his problems.⁴⁰

Issa more than any other Japanese poet matched the spirit of this era, and interest in Issa and his work was quickened because of this. The literary climate in Japan was uniquely suited to the appreciation of Issa, and the work done by local poets in Shinano was from this time widely recognised and appreciated in literary circles in Japan.⁴¹

In 1922 Issa Senshū,⁴² a selection of Issa's verses and prose pieces by Nakamura Rokurō was published, followed in the same year by Shinsen Issa Zenshū,⁴³ by Katsumine Shinpū, and Issa Nikkihyō⁴⁴ by Koike Naotaro. These works marked the beginning of a five year period in which over 70 volumes on Issa and his poetry were published in Japan.⁴⁵ Other important volumes during this period included

1923. Issa Ikō Chichi no Shūen Nikki, by Ogihara Seisensui.

" Issa no Shōgai Oyobi Geijitsu, by Kurozawa Takanobu.

1925. Ora ga Haru, edited by Haishōdō Press.

" Issa Tabi Nikki, by Katsumine Shinpū.

" Issa to Ryōta to Bashō, by Sōma Gyofu.

1926. Issa Nanabu Shū, by Katsumine Shinpū.

" Issa Zenshū, by Shimada Seiho.

" Bashō to Issa, by Ogihara Seisensui.

" Issa Shinkō, by Kurifu Sumio.

" Haijin Issa, by Yokoyama Seiga.

" Ningen Issa no Shōgai, by Yoshimatsu Yuichi.

1927. Issa Haiku Shinshaku, by Kawashima Tsuyu.

" Kabukan and Kyūban Nikki, by Ogihara Seisensui.

" Issa Zuihitsu Senshū, by Sōma Gyofu.

" Ora ga Haru: Waga Haru Shū, by Ogihara Seisensui.

" Issa Ichidai Shū, by Katsumine Shinpū.

" Issa Hachiban Nikki, by Kurifu Sumio.

" Issa Kushū, Shidara, by Ogihara Seisensui. 46

In addition to the great number of books by individual authors there were two sets of books on Issa published at this time. A seven volume collection of Issa's works edited by Ogihara Seisensui for the non specialist was published between 1926 and 1928, entitled Issa Bunko,⁴⁷ and in Shinano at the same time a fourteen volume work which contained all the known work of Issa and which included the first publication of Kansei Kuchō, Bunsei Kuchō, Kyōwa Kuchō, Kadoban, Sankanjin and Sarabakasa, was published by the Shinano Education Committee entitled Issa Sōsho.⁴⁸ Issa Sōsho was carefully edited with extensive and detailed notes and became the basic text for serious study of Issa until the publication of Issa Zenshū between 1976 and 1979.⁴⁹

Bashō to Issa by Ogihara was written from the viewpoint of Issa's personality, rather than Issa's poetry.

Issa to Ryōta to Bashō by Sōma compares the life and work of the three poets and interprets Issa from a sympathetic view of his faults and weaknesses as a man. Issa Shinkō by Kurifu corrects many of the mistaken theories about Issa's life and presents many new insights upon his life and work.⁵⁰

Many of these works were published to coincide with the hundredth anniversary of Issa's death (1927), and this year marked the peak of the great interest shown by scholars, poets, and the general public in Issa and his poetry around this time.

After 1927 this interest began to decrease but even so many fine works were published after this date. Among them the following are listed in the three sources used for this chapter;

1928. Issa no Shujusō, by Kawashima Tsuyu.

" Issa, Hachiban Nikki, by Okubo Itsudo and Kurifu Sumio.

1930. Issa no Kenkyū, by Fujimoto Jitsuya.

1932. Saigyō, Seibi, Issa, by Yamaguchi Takashi.⁵¹

All these works shed further light on Issa's life and poetry and each had a unique contribution towards the understanding of the great amount of written material Issa left. Issa, Hachiban Nikki was the first publication of this major collection of Issa's verses.⁵² Yamaguchi Takashi was a noted scholar of Japanese literature in general and that such a scholar should compare the work

of Issa and Seibi with a poet as central to Japanese literature as Saigyō is indicative that Issa's work as a contribution to Japanese literature as a whole, and not just to haiku poetry, was being recognised.⁵³

From the commencement of the Shōwa period (1926) more attention was paid to Issa than to any other haiku poet. Apart from the tendency towards naturalistic realism within Japanese literary circles during this period, there were other factors which led to the great popularity of Issa and his poetry at this time.

The first was the fact that 1927 marked the hundredth anniversary of his death. This resulted in great enthusiasm in Shinano for research into, and the publication of books about, Issa. Because by this time the group of local scholars and poets in Shinano were in close contact with, and communicating regularly with, nationally recognised scholars, this enthusiasm was not confined to Shinano alone but spread all over Japan.⁵⁴

The second factor was a change in the educational policy in Japan at the end of the Taishō and the beginning of the Shōwa periods. This was a time when freedom of expression and the development of individuality were being stressed in Japan.^{54a} The trend was away from uniformity towards individuality. For this reason, even in primary schools, especially in the textbooks for the study of Japanese language, greater use was made of extracts from Japanese literature which would help develop these qualities. Bashō, with his depth of meaning, was difficult for children to understand and appreciate, but

the simplicity of Issa's language and the childlikeness of many of his verses made his poetry the obvious choice for inclusion in school textbooks. From this time verses by Issa appeared in the language textbooks of primary and secondary schools all over Japan. As a consequence of this most Japanese felt an affinity with the poetry of Issa to a degree not enjoyed by any other poet. This generated a widespread general interest in Issa and his work.⁵⁵

The third factor that further promoted an interest in Issa was that during this period there arose within the literary world in Japan an increasing sense of class-consciousness. Reaction against ruling authority was not an objective of Issa's poetry but some of his verses, particularly those found in chapter 2 section (vi) Issa's Observation of the Lives of Ordinary People and the Social Aspect of his Poetry, were interpreted in the context of class-consciousness. His egoism, cynicism, sarcasm, inferiority complex, and the experience of discrimination in Edo certainly resulted in poetic expressions of dissatisfaction as he constantly sided with the poor, the beggar, the blindman and the weaker elements of society, but he was not a reactionary in the modern sense of the word. However, some of his poetry was thus interpreted in the early 1930's and this increased even further the popular interest in his life and work.⁵⁶

It was during the period between 1920 and 1935 that Issa's reputation as one of the three major poets of the Tokugawa period was established.⁵⁷

After this period of extensive research and strong popular interest, the study of Issa entered a more reflective period. The great quantity of material now available to scholars was re-appraised.⁵⁸ Issa's personality and unique characteristics became the subject of specialised study in works such as;

1936. Issa Ichidai Monogatari, by Ishida Yoshihide.

1939. Issa no Seishin Bunseki, by Miyata Shigeko and
Onusa Kenji.

1939. Issa, by Miyata Shigeko.

1943. Kobayashi Issa, by Ito Masao.

1939. Issa Kenkyū, by Ogiwara Seisensui.

1939. Issa no Shōgai to Geijitsu, by Takakura Teru.

1942. Issa Sobyō, by Sōma Gyofu. ⁵⁹

Issa no Seishin Bunseki was a psycho-analytic study of Issa's personality. Kobayashi Issa was written from the standpoint of Issa's rural background and remains one of the finest single volume works on Issa even to this day. Issa Kenkyū was the fruit of many years of study by the Issa specialist Ogiwara. Issa no Shōgai to Geijitsu dealt in detail with the life of Issa as a vagrant-poet, and Issa Sobyō was written by the accomplished poet, Sōma, from a poet's point of view.⁶⁰

The following works compared Issa's poetry with that of other poets;

1938. Sennenji to Issa, by Matsuo Meitoku.

1940. Issa to Hakusai, by Arai Issei.

1943. Issa to Bunko, by Arai Issei.

1944. Issa to Bashō, by Miyagi Kenichi. ⁶¹

Further research was made into source materials and published in the following works;

1935. Chichi no Shūen Nikki, by Ogihara Seisensui.

1938. Shidara, " "

1938. Issa Shinseki Shū, " "

1940. Ora ga Haru, Issa Bunshū, " "

1941. Issa Dokuhon, " " 62

Among these, Issa's work Shidara was published for the first time.⁶³

Works which provided detailed commentary on Issa's prose and poetry included the following;

1940. Issa Meiku Hyōshaku, by Katsumine Shinpū.

1942. Issa no Ora ga Haru, " "

Issa no Ora ga Haru is still considered a standard text on Issa's most famous work.⁶⁴

Though not as numerous as in the previous decade, this steady stream of scholarly and critical works between 1930 and 1945 sustained a strong interest in Issa and his poetry, and helped to develop a clearer understanding of his life and work.

The great popularity of Issa among the general public during the 1930's was not for his poetry alone, but rather for his personality for it matched the spirit of that age in a unique way. Haiku scholars who evaluated Issa's poetry in the context of traditional and conventional values did not consider Issa a poet worthy of the high acclaim that was being given him, and some, to this day, question whether much of his poetry is really haiku at all. It was with the general public in particular that Issa and his work found an acceptance greater than that

enjoyed by any other poet.

There has never been a school of poets, either during his life time or after it, devoted to Issa's style of poetry. His work was so vast, so varied, so personal and so much part of his daily life that it defies the normal criteria of evaluation. Keene states;

"His enormous success with his readers, especially after his rediscovery by Masaoka Shiki in the 1890's, proves that he supplied a want that no other poet filled, even though his subject matter was limited. Issa had no literary posterity. If he had never appeared the history of haiku would probably not have been much changed. But we are fortunate that there was an Issa; the sincerity and warmth emanating from his poetry were qualities rare in the haiku poetry of any age and unique in their own". (World Within Walls, page 368).

Herein lies the cause, both for his popularity within literary circles and the general public, and for his lack of popularity with the haiku purist.

4. 1945-1985.

After the Second World War, as early as 1947, a group in Nagano prefecture organized under the name "Haikaiji Issa Hozonkai" (Association for the Preservation of the Issa Haiku Temple) arranged public lectures, discussion meetings and haiku gatherings in order to commemorate the 120th. anniversary of Issa's death. This association also undertook to repair and maintain the storehouse in which Issa spent his final years, and collected into one place all the volumes on Issa that could be obtained and thus became a centre for research on the life and work of Issa. This activity culminated in the publication of
66
a small commemorative volume Issa Matsuri.

Furthermore, in 1952, the Shinano Education Committee

arranged a series of lectures on Issa which attracted scholars from all over Japan, and which helped to rekindle research into his life and work.⁶⁷

On a national scale the formation of the "Haibungakukai" (Association of Haiku Scholars), haiku scholars formed into one organization, and the study of haiku and haiku history made rapid progress. On the other hand, however, although new materials were discovered and some study of Bashō, Buson and Issa did take place, it was largely occupied with the assessment of pre-war studies rather than the development of further research into their lives and poetry.⁶⁸

In the first thirty years after the war many other haiku poets of the Edo period were studied and assessed in much the same way that Issa and Buson were before the Second World War.. The study of Bashō progressed during this period, Buson was studied to some degree and new works written and published, but the study of Issa lagged behind..⁶⁹

Notable exceptions to this general statement were books by Kurifu Sumio and Kawashima Tsuyu. The former wrote regularly in the haiku magazine Kano and in his articles published his research on Issa. He also introduced for the first time Issa's work Manroku no Haru in this magazine, and produced biographies of Issa in both 1948 and 1950 under the titles of Issa no Shōgai and Issa Den. The latter wrote a biography of Issa entitled Issa in 1947, and also produced new commentaries on Ora ga Haru in 1955 and 1956.⁷⁰

Other titles of note published during the first thirty years after the second world war include;

- 1949. Issa, by Kuriyama Riichi.
- 1949. Issa to Shimosa, by Tomimura Noboru.
- 1950. Kobayashi Issa, by Kuribayashi Issekiro.
- 1953. Issa Kenkyūshi, by Iwate Daigaku Gakugei Gakubu.
- 1954. Kobayashi Issa Shū, by Ito Masao.⁷¹

In recent years however the study of Issa has once more gained fresh impetus. Among scholars who have recently published work on Issa is Maruyama Kazuhiko, with Kobayashi Issa, in 1965. Republished in 1979 this book is now considered a basic text for students of Issa.⁷² Other more recent publications on Issa and his poetry include;

- 1970. Issa Shū, by Maruyama Kazuhiko and Kobayashi Shinichiro.
- 1970.. Kobayashi Issa, by Kuriyama Riichi.
- 1971. Issa Zuihitsu, by Kuribayashi Takao.
- 1972. Kobayashi Issa to sono Shūhen, by Ozawa Kiyu.
- 1979. Kobayashi Issa, Urifu Takuzō.
- 1980. Kobayashi Issa; Mukudori no Haijin, by Kaneko Tōta.
- 1981. Kobayashi Issa to Shimosa no Haijintachi, by Sugitani Tokuzō.
- 1982. Haikaiji Issa no Geijitsu, by Takai Sōfu.

By far the most important publication of recent years, however, is the nine volume Issa Zenshū published by the Mainichi Shinbun Press between 1976 and 1979. It includes every known work of Issa's up to the date of publication and also includes the text of linked verse sequences in which he took part and the texts of verse

collections by other poets in which poems by Issa are included. The ninth volume, or bekkan, contains a very detailed chronology of Issa's life, a list of all the known books written about Issa up till 1979, and various other aids to the student of Issa and his work.

The history of the study of Issa and his poetry has progressed through various stages as the manuscripts of his work were gradually discovered and made available. Issa was known in the late 1890's as simply a light-hearted, witty and comical poet with a love for small and weak animals, then as man of religious faith, a recluse, a discontent, a failure, and a rebel. Later he was seen as a 'free spirit', a vagrant who wandered hither and thither sharing his laughter and his tears, and as a farmer-poet, until today we have a much clearer and well informed picture of Issa and his poetry. We have a much clearer picture of the kind of life that Issa lived and why he lived it, as well as being better able to interpret his poetry in the light of that knowledge.⁷³

Issa was above all an honest and realistic poet to whom poetic convention was of only secondary importance. His work was an expression of his own feelings, both his poetic sensibilities and his own personality and its reaction to his circumstances and experiences. His uniqueness as a poet and his popularity among the Japanese people, in my opinion, lies here. He was a fine poet, but his personality pervades his poetry to such an extent, and his experiences are common to all men to such a degree, that he evokes a sympathy, and a heartfelt

understanding, in all who read his story and his poetry.

Of all the poets in the history of Japan it is Issa
alone who can be truly called 'the people's poet'.

NOTES ON CHAPTER THREE.

1. Buson: Issa, Nihonbungakukenkyūshiryōsoshō p.265,
Buson: Issa, Nihonkotenbungakukanshō vol.32 p.397.
2. Kobayashi Issa, by Ito Masao p.1.
3. Buson: Issa, Nihonbungakukenkyūshiryōsoshō p.305-311,
Kaisetsu, Kenkyūshi by Yamashita Kazumi p.306.
4. Ibid., p.306
5. " "
6. Ito p.3.
7. Kokubungaku Kaishaku to Kanshō Sept.1957 issue p.45-55
Issa Kenkyūshi by Ozawa Yoshio p.47.
8. Comp. Works vol.Bekkan p.52.
9. Ozawa p.47.
10. Comp. Works vol.4 p.5.
11. Ibid., vol.6 p.134.
12. Ozawa p.47.
13. " "
14. " "
15. Yamashita p.306.
16. " "
17. Ito p.4. 17a. tanka: 31 syllable poem in 5 lines of
18. " p.4-5. 5, 7, 5, 7, 7 syllables each.
19. " p.5.
20. World Within Walls, by Keene p.352.
21. Ozawa p.48
22. " "
23. Tayojo, haiku poetess (1775-1865). Studied haiku
under Mishihiko and Otsuni and lived in Edo from
1815. (see Haiku Jiten, Kinsei p.216.).
24. Atsujin, haiku poet (1759-1838). (see Haiku Jiten p.5)
25. Ozawa p.48.
26. " "
27. " p.48-49.
28. Ito p.9.
29. " p.9-10.
30. Ozawa p.49
31. " "
32. " "
33. Comp. Works vol. bekkan p.49.

34. Comp. Works vol.bekkan p.49
35. Ito p.13.
36. " p.12.
37. " p.14.
38. Ozawa p.49.
39. " "
40. " " and Ito p.6.
41. Ito p.7.
42. Yamashita p.307.
43. " "
44. Ozawa p.49.
45. " "
46. List compiled from Ozawa p.50 and Yamashita p.307.
47. Ozawa p.50.
48. Ito p.15-16.
49. Ozawa p.50.
50. " "
51. List compiled from Ozawa p.50 and Yamashita p.308.
52. Ozawa p.50.
53. Yamashita p.308.
54. Ozawa p.51. 54a. Ito p.17.
55. Ito p.17.
56. Ito p.18.
57. Ozawa p.51.
58. " "
59. List compiled from Ozawa p.51 and Yamashita p.309.
60. Ozawa p.51.
61. " "
62. " p.52.
63. Ito p.19.
64. Ozawa p.52.
65. Ito p.19.
66. Ozawa p.52.
67. " "
68. Yamashita p.309.
69. " p.310.
70. Ozawa p.53.
71. List from Ozawa p.53.
72. Yamashita p.310.
73. Ozawa p.54.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Japanese.

Issa Zenshū, 8 volumes plus 1 supplementary volume (bekkan).
 Edited by the Shinano Kyōiku Kai, Nagano city,
 Shinano Mainichi Shinbunsha Press, 1976-1979.

Buson:Issa, Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei vol.58. Edited by
 Teruoka Yasutaka and Kawashima Tsuyu, Tōkyo,
 Iwanami Shoten, 1979 edition.

Buson:Issa, Nihon Koten Bungaku Kanshō vol.32. Edited by
 Shimizu Takayuki and Kuriyama Riichi, Tōkyo,
 Kadokawa Shoten, 1976.

Buson:Issa, Nihon Bungaku Kenkyū Shiryō Sōsho. Edited by
 the Nihon Bungaku Kenkyū Shiryō Kankōkai,
 Tōkyo, Yūseido Press, 1975.

Kinsei Haiku Haibun Shū, Nihon Koten Bungaku Zenshū vol.42.
 Tōkyo, Shōgakukan, 1979 edition.

Kaishaku to Kanshō, Kokubungaku (magazine), Tōkyo, Shibundō
 Press, September 1956 edition.

Kogo Jiten, Tōkyo, Ōbunsha, 1974 edition.

Emoto Kaneko ed., Kotowaza Shojiten, Tōkyo, Fukuinkan
 Shoten, 1957.

Fujimoto Jitsuya, Issa no Kenkyū, Tokyo, Jūjiya Shoten,
 1949 edition.

Fukisawa Fuhei, Issa, Tōkyo, Bungei Shunjū, 1978.

Ito Masao, Kobayashi Issa, Tōkyo, Sanseidō Press, 1942.

Kaneko Tōta, Kobayashi Issa Mukudori no Haijin, Tōkyo,
 Kodansha Press, 1980.

Katsumine Shinpū, Issa no Ora ga Haru, Tōkyo, Jūjiya
 Shoten, 1949 edition.

Katsumata Senkichiro ed. Kenkyūsha's New Japanese-English
 Dictionary, 1957 edition.

- Kuriyama Riichi, Kobayashi Issa, Nihon Shijinsen no.19.
Tōkyo Chikuma Shobō, 1973.
- Maruyama Kazuhiko, Kobayashi Issa, Shinkan Haiku Series
Hito to Sakuhin no.3. Tōkyo Ōfusha Press,
1979.
- Masahara Yoshihiko, Enshakai to Ningen Kankei, Kyōto, PHP
Kenkyūsho, 1983.
- Murata Noboru, Haikaiji Issa no Geijitsu, Shimonoseki,
Nishi Nihon Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūsho. 1969.
- Matsuo Yasuaki ed. Haiku Jiten, Kinsei, Tōkyo, Chikumasha,
1977.
- Ogihara Seisensui, Bashō to Issa, Tōkyo, Shunjūsha, 1925.
- Sugiya Tokuzō, Kobayashi Issa to Shimosa no Haijintachi,
Tōkyo, Akatsukiin Shoten, 1981.
- Takai Sōfu, Haikaiji Issa no Geijitsu, Tōkyo, Gyōsei Tsū-
shinsha, 1978.
- Urifu Takuzo, Kobayashi Issa, Tōkyo, Kadokawa Shoten, 1979.
- Wada Shigeki, Kobayashi Issa Kansei Nananen Kikō, Matsuyama,
Ehime Shuppan Kyōkai, 1967.
- The following works were consulted for help with the
interpretation and translation of poems and prose pieces.
- Imoto Noichi and Hori Nobuo ed. Koten Haiku o Manabu,
Buson:Issa o Chūshin Toshite, Tōkyo, Yūhikaku
Press, 1977.
- Nakamura Rokurō, Issa Senshū, Kyōto, Rakutō Shoin, 1932
edition.
- Katsumine Shinpū, Issa Meiku Hyōshaku, Tōkyo, Hibonkaku,
1935.
- Ogihara Seisensui, Issa Haikushū, Tōkyo, Iwanami Shoten
1979 edition.
- Sōma Gyōfu, Issa to Ryōta to Bashō, Tōkyo, Shunjūsha, 1925.
- Sōma Gyōfu, Bonnōjin Issa, Tōkyo, Jitaugyō no Nihonsha,
1936.
- Teruoka Yasutaka, Kinsei Haiku, Gakuto Bunko, undated.
- Urano Yoshio, Issa Ron, Tōkyo, Taidōkan Shoten, 1935.
- Urano Yoshio, Haijin Issa, Tōkyo, Taidōkan Shoten, 1935.

English.

- Brower and Miner, Japanese Court Poetry, Stanford California, Stanford Univ. Press, 1975 edition.
- Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai Press, The Teaching of Buddha, Tōkyo, 1977 edition.
- de Bary Wm. Theodore, Sources of Japanese Tradition, 2 vols. Columbia Univ. Press. 1964 edition.
- Keene Donald, World Within Walls, Charles Tuttle Press, Tōkyo, 1978.
- Kirkwood Kenneth, Renaissance in Japan, Charles Tuttle Press, Tōkyo, 1970.
- Masahara Aneseki, History of Japanese Religion, Charles Tuttle Press, Tōkyo, 1963.
- Ozaki Robert, The Japanese, Charles Tuttle Press, Tōkyo, 1978.
- Otani University, Jōdo Shinshū, Kyōto, 1961.
- Papinot E., Historical and Geographical Dictionary of Japan, Charles Tuttle Press, Tōkyo, 1972.
- Reischauer Edwin O., The Japanese, Charles Tuttle Press, Tōkyo, 1978.
- Sadler A.L. translated by, The Ten Foot Square Hut and The Tales of the Heike, Charles Tuttle Press, Tōkyo, 1972.
- Ueda Makoto, Matsuo Bashō, The Master Haiku Poet, Kodansha Press, Tōkyo, 1982.
- Yuasa Nobuyuki, The Year of My Life, Univ. of California Press, 1972 edition.
- Yuasa Nobuyuki, The Narrow Road to the North and Other Travel Sketches, Penquin Books, London, 1966.
- The following works were also used to help with the interpretation of poems.
- Blyth R.H., A History of Haiku, 2 vols. The Hokuseido Press, Tōkyo, 1963.
- Blyth R.H., Haiku, 4 vols. Hokuseido Press, Tōkyo, 1950.
- Mackenzie Lewis, The Autumn Wind, John Murray Press, London 1957.

